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THE ORIGINAL JESUS

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THE ORIGINAL JESUS

[DER GOLDGRUND DES LEBENSBILDES JESU]

By

OTTO BORCHERT, D.D.

*Author of "Der Tod Jesu Im Lichte Seiner Eigenen
Worte und Taten"*

TRANSLATED BY

L. M. STALKER



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

To give a brief and satisfactory English rendering of *Der Goldgrund des Lebensbildes Jesu* constituted a formidable problem. The title chosen, while not altogether adequate, may be considered fairly suitable inasmuch as the book sets forth the glory of Jesus as the *fons et origo* of the innumerable blessings which are ours in His salvation. He, who is "the effulgence of God's glory," is "the author and finisher of our faith." It also exhibits the *originality* of Jesus in the sense of His "uninventedness." The picture would have been utterly different if it had been invented by human genius, no matter how richly talented the mind or highly gifted the imagination.

Der Goldgrund des Lebensbildes Jesu has had a remarkable history. It had to wait for sixteen years before it found a publisher, having been offered and rejected no less than ten times. The explanation lies in the fact that it was ahead of its time. With the disillusionment brought about by the Great War and the subsequent Peace it found its public and its message went home. Many editions in the original German have been exhausted; it has been translated into Dutch, Danish, Swedish; and now it appears in English, offering to the man in the street, in language free from all theological technicalities, a study of the Gospel picture—fresh, profound, and comprehensive—which makes Jesus live before the reader's eyes.

Dr. Otto Borchert studied at Leipzig, Halle, and Wittenberg. When in business in his early days he met doubters who were affected by Biblical criticism and philosophical scepticism. Strauss's *Life of Jesus* in its unsettling influence drove him to an intense and independent study of the Gospel narratives. Since 1901 he has occupied the position of Pastor and Inspector of Schools, Westergaussen, Hanover, and his writings have enriched and strengthened the minds of thousands of readers in many

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lands. Miss G. M. Brown Douglas and the Reverend F. J. Rae, M.A., D.D., Director of Religious Instruction, Religious Training Centre, Aberdeen, have rendered valuable help to the translator, and the Reverend W. Marwick, Edinburgh, has kindly supplied the references for the quotations from Carlyle.

In Book I, Part II, Chapter III, the extracts from *The Heliand* have not been reproduced, as these are always available for the German reader in the original work.

R. MERCER WILSON.

BOOK ONE

THE "FOOLISHNESS" IN THE PICTURE OF
JESUS: ITS VALUE IN THE SCIENTIFIC
DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

INTRODUCTION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEME

THE following pages are designed to fix our thoughts on that point which marks the zenith of the Christian's interest—the life-story itself of our Saviour. We should like to make credible His portrait in the form in which it is offered to us by the Gospels. Naturally this can be undertaken from many different standpoints, and the opposition it may arouse will depend not least on the way in which it is presented. For our part, we should like to attempt its defence from a side which so far has received little attention, but in which it seems to us there lies a particularly convincing power. Let us therefore develop our idea.

* * * * *

What did Rousseau really mean by his well-known words on the life-story of Jesus and its origin: "The man who invented it would be greater and more astonishing than its hero"? Surely what he chiefly means is this: the portrait given of Jesus towers above human conception and invention, it is too great, too pure, too perfect to have been conceived in the human brain. "And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark ix. 3)—these words from the story of the transfiguration, says Rousseau, are true also of Jesus' inner man. No hand on earth could have painted the snow-white garment of light in which the Gospels present Him to us. There will always be many who believe that this is so. Many people are firmly convinced of the truth which Lavater wrote on a scrap of paper as he lay dying, "Terrible and without number are the doubts of the believing Christian, but the unfathomableness of Christ conquers them all."

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The story of Christ cannot be fathomed by human intelligence. The matter may be considered in the following way: the depravity of human nature is not only so great that man, as is very evident, does not do the good which he perceives; no, the depravity of human nature has gone so far that it has seized on human understanding and affects man's intelligence. No sensible person can deny that this is so in isolated instances, but the assertion is made that the same overcasting of the moral intelligence would be discernible if a collective result could be obtained of the highest moral perceptions to be found in the most varied individuals all over the world. Even the ideal thus obtained would fall into error and could not reach the highest because of universal sin. For even in human thought, it is said, there is always a residue where depravity works its will. (Cf. Rom. xii. 2: not only that he may be able to *do* what is morally right, but that he may be able to *recognize* it, a man requires nothing less than complete regeneration.)¹

The findings of experience confirm this train of thought. We perceive in different races and in different centuries ideal figures, the creation of many heads and busy hands, often a tissue woven by many generations, the attempt having been made to glorify one man above his fellows—but it has not been successful in a single instance. In every case the deficiencies can easily be perceived, and the blots on the picture are very clearly visible to everyone who is not wilfully short-sighted. To take only one of these figures: to his disciples and his race Confucius is the man “who never sinned, because he was incapable of sin.” Yet how easy it is to perceive sin in the picture we have of him—for instance, his lack of veracity.² The

¹ “Man cannot ascend beyond a certain height in an airship, and this is even more clearly demonstrable in the flight of thought.” How apposite this remark is, particularly in reference to morality!

² One of his disciples tells us, “If Confucius does not wish to receive a guest, he makes the excuse of being unwell.” On his journey from Tschin to Wei, Confucius arrived at Pu, which was at war

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character of Jesus as the Gospels have rendered it is the only one in the world in which the sharpest eye can find no sin; and so it bears with it its own evidence that it comes from above. The sinful human brain is no Jupiter-head from which this sinless human figure could have emerged.

From above! This figure of Jesus is a strange growth, alien in the fullest sense. Another thing reveals the origin of the picture—the fact that the human mind is incapable of adding anything to it. A short time ago, under the title of “A New Saying of our Lord,” an esteemed scientific journal drew attention to a supposed saying of our Lord’s hitherto unnoticed, which appears three times in Latin in ancient English literature. One has only to hear it to feel how far removed it is from the words of Christ: “Be courageous in battle, fight with the old serpent, and yours shall be the Kingdom of Heaven.”¹ The idea is Christian, and yet it does not attain to the standard of Christ’s words. In 1897 a papyrus was discovered, said to date from A.D. 140, and containing seven sayings of Jesus. Two of these are the same as sayings of our Lord already known, but in the others, which are new, the lower level is very apparent.

In his well-known novel, *Ben Hur*, Wallace is daring enough to make the Saviour appear twice on the scene. The author is sufficiently astute not to attribute any words of his own invention to our Lord, only recording an action of the Saviour. The first incident is when Ben Hur, treated as a human outcast, is brought to Nazareth as a murderer, and Jesus, then a young man, offers him with Wei. When the inhabitants of Pu learned of his intention, they refused to let him go. Whereupon Confucius swore with an oath that he would not go to Wei, and was set at liberty. Yet he did go to Wei. When one of his disciples asked him, “May a vow then be broken?” he replied, “It was a vow extorted by force, and such the gods do not hear.”

¹ *Estote fortes in bello et pugnate cum antiquo serpente et accipietis regnum aeternum.*

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a cup of water with a profound look of pity in His eyes. Here the heights of the Gospel story are not attained. He was compassionate, too, towards the adulteress, outcast and sentenced to death by stoning, but He gave her something better than pity, the best thing of all—words which were to become for her a flaming memory (John viii. 11). In the second incident Wallace makes Ben Hur accompany the Saviour on His way to the crucifixion, and offer to help Him. Jesus makes no answer—and yet, in the same hour, even the tears of the women moved Him to speech.

The truth is, the figure of Jesus as shown to us in the Gospels has all the characteristics of a metal which resists every alloy. Anything added to the likeness does not contribute to the whole, but betrays itself as a foreign substance which cannot be blended in the crucible.

* * * * *

The train of thought we have been following, that of the unfathomableness of Christ, seems to us to be a profitable one. Like the dying Lavater, we are aware of a breath from Heaven blowing round us when we come into Christ's presence; we feel that this Jesus is not of the earth, and that the likeness is not made by human hands. But this has to be felt and experienced; and it is difficult to prove, on the other hand, that human imagination should be incapable of glorifying and exalting a loved one to any extent. Some people have an unlimited belief in the capacity of human thought and imagination for embellishing and developing, and how are we to weaken such a belief? Just as the power of imagination cannot be limited in picturing the beauty of some object, so, according to the people who reason in this way, human thought can, by the power of imagination, morally exalt a being which it loves to the point of transfiguring it. And if in doing so the mind should take the way of denying all that is ugly and sweeping away everything bad from the picture it paints, if love

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were to guide the brush, the clearest, brightest portrait would be created. And besides, it is said, these disciples who so lovingly glorified their Master from Nazareth had already the clearest, brightest colours at hand for their picture, in the idealistic utterances of the prophets. The fishermen of the Lake of Gennesareth had only to make use of the exaggerated adulation expended on the expected Messiah, and the glowing picture which they have painted for us would be well on its way to completion.

It cannot be denied that this "glorification of Jesus" at the hands of His disciples provides a ground for constant suspicion among the great army of doubters. It is not only the suspicion cherished by David Strauss and his disciples, but it is ultimately that felt by the numberless multitude of all doubters. They are convinced that the Christ portrayed in the Bible is the creation of His disciples, who were the first to exalt Him to such heights, who in their love were the first to make Him glorious. Once, disastrously, a nation believed that the disciples came and stole Him away. Later there arose the far more widely disseminated delusion that His disciples by their preaching—which is all the New Testament gives us—were the first to glorify Him. But if doubt through the centuries has built its own fortress here, this is just where we must make our attack. His thankful followers are accused of transfiguring Jesus by their words. Then it is surely important for the defence to bring out how much is to be found in the life of Jesus that is inglorious, strange, yes, even offensive. One after another all have been offended in Him—the Baptist, the disciples, the people, the Christian community of the second century, the rising Catholic Church, the expositors of the Bible, our own hearts. It can be proved, and for the defence the proof is important, that as soon as men withdrew their opposition to the picture given in the Gospels and followed their own imagination, they never painted the likeness with the colours used by the

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evangelists. For the figure that looks at us from the Gospel story is not one which is always exalted and glorified, rather does it bear on its forehead, even to-day, the sign of much that is an offence. It has features that will never appeal as great to the natural man, features to which we have gradually to accustom ourselves, and which are now an example to us only because, gazing at Jesus, we have become convinced of their worth. And these characteristics of which we speak are not only to be found here and there in the picture, so that one might think the evangelists had merely forgotten to erase them when they idealized the main traits—no, they are the basic features of the portrait of Jesus. But if this is so, then this portrait can only be understood as a product of the most scrupulous historical accuracy. The members of that early community did not find in themselves the solid foundations and the divine features of the Saviour of the world, they gave them to us as they received them, even when they thereby outraged their own feelings.¹

There are only two ways of looking at the matter. It may be, as the doubter believes, that the figure of the Beloved One has been faithfully adorned with all imaginable splendour and glory, and a halo fashioned for His head such as the pictures of the saints show us. In a letter to Lavater, Goethe uses this strong expression to illustrate such a procedure: “To pluck out the feathers of every bird and give them to the one and only bird of Paradise.” And the result? Such a stream of idealization would have swept away everything that is displeasing in Jesus, or at least have left only a few solitary characteristics emerging from the flood. Or else the matter stands thus: Jesus is not only the Beloved whom a grateful

¹ It is only natural that we who have been brought up in Christianity are not at once acutely aware of this strangeness in the figure of Jesus, as the disciples and their contemporaries were. We have known this figure since our childhood, our thoughts and ideas have been more or less formed by it, we have grown accustomed to it. We are already “clean through the word” (John xv. 3).

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community adorns with a halo of light, He is the Lord and Master before whom they kneel and worship. And what follows from that? The community stood silent in adoring reverence before the life of this Man, not daring to add or subtract anything, holding with special loyalty to all that was alien and unexpected in it, hoping always for the fulfilment of the promise, "What I do ye know not now, but ye shall know it hereafter." In this case it was a conception thrust upon them. No imagining of their own brains, but wisdom from God. It is a conception that bears the title, "I am from above" (John viii. 23).

There is a difference between the *ethical* (moral) revelation as revealed to us in the story of Christ and the *dogmatic* revelation (matters of belief). Our understanding can for the most part approve the dogmatic revelation. Sayings, for instance, such as that concerning the image of God which man bears within him, or of the Fatherhood of God, flatter our understanding; we have nothing against such ideas, and we even believe we might have thought them out for ourselves (compare Lessing). The ethical revelation, on the contrary, is directly opposed to our self-will—that is, to our sinfulness. It remains alien and distasteful to the natural man within us all our lives; and yet, as a revelation, it can be more easily proved. It carries with it the *offence* as the eternal hallmark of its genesis from above.

In one way it may be considered a thankless task to seek out only what is alien and strange to us in the story of Jesus.¹ How much more attractive it would be to trace those passages in which even to the natural eye Jesus is the loveliest among the sons of men! Someone has said that "Jesus wears the star of His order beneath His cloak." We mean to make an unequal division—we

¹ It is therefore possible that this study of what offends may distress and even alarm some people. Such readers will find this feeling removed when they turn to Chapter III, Part III, Book One, and particularly to the second half of the work on the Glory of Jesus.

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mean to examine the cloak and leave the star to others. But the way we propose to travel holds a promise. Its issue will be that Jesus has not been transfigured by the hand of man, but that the community of the first century stood awestruck before the story of His life even when it was displeasing to them. We see Him as He was.

After all, we have not made our own choice of the way we mean to take, we are only following a thought to be found in the Bible. “Unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (1 Cor. i. 23), is Paul’s testimony to the crucified Jesus. Probably he did not limit this only to the fact of the crucifixion; for when the Master Himself says, “Blessed is he that shall not be offended because of Me,” the expectation is expressed that not only in that last night would all the world be offended because of Him, but that in other ways, too, He would be an offence to all the world. And so our intention of bringing out that which is a stumbling-block in the story of Jesus is only following up a thought already touched on by Jesus Himself.

PART ONE

**DIRECT PROOF OF THE OFFENCE
IN THE LIFE-STORY OF JESUS**

CHAPTER I

THE STUMBLING-BLOCK CHARACTERISTICS IN THE MESSIAH

"Unto the Jews a stumbling-block."

I CORINTHIANS I. 23

WHEN the Saviour came among His people He was far from being unexpected. On the contrary, no people either before or since has cherished such hopes of the advent of any man. A whole literature—the so-called Jewish Apocalyptic—had been built up, the object of which was to think out the future of the world, and the days of the Messiah were like the hinges of the door on which the whole turned. And this literature was not a thing without influence, standing aloof from the thought and action of the people, nor yet the reflections of a small and perhaps specially pious circle. The constantly recurring outbreaks of rebellion at that time, as well as the Gospels themselves, are proof enough of how strong and alive was the Messianic idea in the life of the people in the time of Jesus. Under the pressure first of the Idumaic and then of the Roman domination, the eyes of all Israel were directed almost fixedly towards the future, watching, as though under a spell, for the Deliverer, the Messiah. "Art thou He that should come?" asks the Baptist (Matt. xi. 3). Even the woman of Samaria declares, "I know that Messias cometh" (John iv. 25). Brother rejoices with brother, "We have found the Messias!" (John i. 41). The Pharisees are ready to discuss the question, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?" (Matt. xxii. 42), and upright men among the people eagerly acknowledge, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" and then boldly confess, "This is the Christ!" (John vii. 31, 41). The whole thought of the time, at least in Israel, was focussed on the

question of the coming of the Messiah. To Jewish eyes the Messianic era did not appear dark and unknown, as the future does from the threshold of a New Year. Since the time of the prophets the people had constructed their own view of the Promised One, sometimes more, sometimes less distinctly; and the upshot of it was that their impressions of Him were as clear as though He had already come. But only once afterwards did the actual appearance of Jesus correspond with the hopes of Israel, and that only for a few moments; and only once, a little later, did it approach in some degree to their expectations. John vi describes the moment in which Jesus embodied the thoughts of His people. Like a popular king He distributes bread and nourishment to the thousands who are camped around Him. The excitement of the people is aroused. At once they are eager—not to *make* Him their king, but to do homage to Him as the king who has now appeared and whom they had not recognized in His disguise (John vi. 15). In the same way, at the beginning of the Passion Week, the solemnity of the entry into Jerusalem awakened again the thoughts of Jesus' kingship (Matt. xxi. 8, 9). But otherwise we do not find in Israel any desire to render homage to Jesus as the Messiah. With a nation longing passionately for the coming of the Messiah, how can this fact be otherwise explained than on the ground that the appearance of Jesus did not correspond with Israel's hopes? Or else His coming must have worked like a spark in a powder-barrel.

But Jesus made quite a different impression. His people were aware that He laid claim to the Messianic title; in fact, at the last this claim was made openly (Matt. xxvi. 64), and He became an offence, provoking their contradiction. This Man the Messiah? It seemed to His people a *contradictio in adjecto*, and in a fury they cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" But this is significant for us, for a Messiah who is an offence will not be a Messiah adorned without discrimination by the love of His followers.

Let us try shortly to find out what it was in Jesus as the Messiah that offended the people. We believe that He failed in two ways to come up to the expectations they cherished: He was too great, and He was too lowly to suit the ideas of Israel.

Jesus was too great for His people. One may ask, Is such a thing possible? Might one not assume that the greater the expected Messiah was the better? The more glorious He was, the more welcome in the circle of those watching and waiting for Him? But what claim to greatness could He make which would be a stumbling-block to His people? In Justin Martyr we read that Tryphon the Jew said of Israel's Messianic hopes, "We all know that the Christ will be a man, born of a man." And in agreement with this, all the older Jewish theology—not to speak of the later theology which is in direct contrast to Christianity—is so far from attributing a divine nature to the Messiah that it rather sets aside by forcible exposition anything which in Old Testament prophecy might be thought to suggest this. One has only to read Isaiah ix. 5 in Rabbi Jonathan's translation: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; He has taken the law upon Himself to keep it. His name is called from eternity, Wonderful, the mighty God who liveth to eternity. The Messiah whose peace shall be great upon us in His days." And now compare the Nazarene with this conception: "Because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John x. 33), that is how Israel declared its rejection of the Galilean Rabbi. And the evangelist mentions specially as the reason for the deadly opposition to Him that He said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God (John v. 18).

We must try to realize clearly Israel's fixed belief in one God. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord"—that was what they wore on their phylacteries (Matt. xxiii. 5) as well as in their hearts. And here was a man making Himself equal to their one God! The rabbis

said of the Shekinah,¹ Where two or three are gathered together it is in the midst of them. But this Man said exactly the same to His followers about Himself (Matt. xviii. 20). By the prophets Jehovah had promised His people, "I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness" (Hos. ii. 20), and now this Son of man put Himself in the place of God as the bridegroom. In one breath He spoke of Himself and His Father making their abode with the children of men (John xiv. 23). And while the pious Israelite spoke with reverence of the angels of God, and in the most glorious name which he knew for his God (Jehovah Sabaoth) praised the Highest as the God of countless hosts of angels, this Jesus, with what to the Jewish ear sounded the most arrogant presumption, spoke of the angels as *His* angels, to whom He gave orders as He pleased (Matt. xiii. 41; xvi. 27). Would it not be just the most pious among them all who would say to Him, as though He must be mad, "Whom makest thou thyself?" (John viii. 53).

We have already seen that the people went still further in judging Him. "This man blasphemeth God," they said. But there was a second thing about Jesus that called forth their judgement. Of one thing the Jews were convinced, "No one can forgive sins but God only" (Mark ii. 7). The forerunner of the Messiah might prepare the way for the remission of sins (Mark i. 4), the Messiah Himself might make intercession for the transgressor (Isa. liii. 12); but that Jesus should dispense the forgiveness of sins as though this came from Himself went straight in the face of what His people believed any man to be capable, and they concluded without hesitation, "This man blasphemeth" (Matt. ix. 3).

There was no third time or, more exactly, no third reason for Israel to pronounce so harsh a judgement.²

¹ The divine presence which rested like a cloud or visible light over the mercy-seat.

² Though it comes a third time in the mouth of the High Priest (Matt. xxvi. 65).

But they had reason enough to be offended because of the greatness to which Jesus laid claim. Let us mention just a few of these reasons.

The Nazarene demanded too much service for Himself to be the Messiah. Israel expected Him to teach them to "serve the Lord without fear all the days of their life" (Luke i. 74). Led by Him they wanted to give themselves up more fully than ever to their God. But instead of this Jesus put Himself to a large extent in the place of God, making Himself the goal of their longing expectations (Luke xii. 35 f.), and declaring Himself to be the Lord to whom the servants should minister (Luke xii. 46).

Again, in the time of the prophets it had always been a sign of the false prophets that they prophesied "out of their own hearts" (Ezek. xiii. 2). But this Jesus was so conscious of being entitled to speak out of His own heart that He testified of the Spirit which He would send and which should receive and testify of Him (John xvi. 14).

Further, it pained and estranged the Jews when our Lord exalted Himself above the august figures of the past. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" asked the woman of Samaria (John iv. 12). "Art thou greater than our father Abraham?" inquired the Jews (John viii. 53). And they murmured against Him when He appeared to exalt Himself above the noblest figure of all, above Moses (John vi. 32, 41 f.). To this people, so proud of their forefathers, this seemed to pile injury upon injury; but it was not in this way that any man would be glorified in the eyes of Israel.

And then to think that the Nazarene should dare to touch the Temple so dear to Israel, to declare Himself to be a holier abode for the presence of God than this holy house, whose inner courts were too hallowed for Israel, and whose innermost courts too sacrosanct even for Israel's priests to enter! "But I say unto you, that in this place is one greater than the Temple" (Matt. xii. 6). What a claim for an Israelite to have to listen to!

"I will be yet more vile than thus, and will be base in

mine own sight" (2 Sam. vi. 22). In these words King David once described to a scoffing princess the humility towards God which he exalted as a precious jewel. Israel expected to see the same gem gleaming on the brow of the Son of David; a humility that bowed to the dust before God, while exhibiting kingly majesty towards the children of men. And instead of this they saw in Jesus a Man who held His head high before God in heaven: "I and My Father are one; he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John x. 30; xiv. 9), but who bowed Himself incomprehensibly before the children of men, choosing service to them as His motto (Matt. xx. 27 f.).

And this leads us to our second reason for declaring that Jesus' claim to be the Messiah made Him a stumbling-block to His people. He was not only too great for them; looked at from another side, He was too lowly. There was nothing about Him which fitted in with the people's conception of Him.

Jesus was too lowly for His people. I would mention first His attitude towards the authorities. Among the Jews God's agents had always been accustomed to confront earthly authority with more force and energy than this Man did. It was Elijah's own king who sent captains of fifty to take him. But the prophet did not hesitate to destroy them all (2 Kings i. 9). In a like case, while speaking of the power at His command, Jesus never lifted a finger to oppose those who had been sent to capture Him (Matt. xxvi. 52 f.).

The heroes of the Lord in Israel were still more regardless when it came to dealing with the Gentile authorities. In the eyes of the Jews these were no better than robbers. Mattathias, the father of Maccabeus, had not hesitated to strike down the Jew who, at the king's command, made an offering on the altar of Modin, and to kill the captain of Antioch at the same time (1 Macc. ii. 25). And this was the legacy he left to his sons: "Take also unto you all those that observe the law, and avenge ye the wrong of your people. Recompense fully the heathen" (1 Macc. ii. 67 f.).

And what did Jesus do? Speaking calmly about the heretic ruler who had been forced upon them, whom the Jews hated and from whom even the most pious longed to be delivered, He said, as though He knew nothing of the longing of His people, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. xxii. 21).

But none of these considerations reached the heart of the matter in which the Nazarene failed utterly to come up to the expectations of His people. This can be summed up in the word "king." The words Messiah and king were for the Jews synonymous. When Israel hoped for a Messiah they were hoping for a king. In the new-born child Herod feared the future, rightful king; the wise men from the East treated the babe as a king; the herald running before to proclaim Him urged Him to mount the royal throne; the disciples pled for places near His throne; the people announced their readiness to render Him kingly homage—and He eluded their claims and offers. When Saul ascended the throne, the people did not murmur so bitterly, "How shall this man save us?" (John xix. 14 f.; 1 Sam. x. 27).

Was Israel on the wrong track when they hoped for a king? Their own prophets had led them by this road. It was the Old Testament view: He through whom God was to bring His Kingdom to fulfilment must be above all a king, a conqueror, and at the same time a lover of peace. The picture of this advent had been brilliantly painted by the hand of the prophets. The government was to be upon his shoulders (Isa. ix. 6); of the increase of His government and peace there should be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it (Isa. ix. 7). He was to stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God, and to be great unto the ends of the earth (Mic. v. 4). And even the silent ones in the land, in times of depression and all through the deep humiliation of the nation, kept their hope stayed on the prophecies, and longed passionately for their king. Those, too, felt that the first action of

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the longed-for Messiah would be to break the alien yoke and to lead His people out of bondage, with miracles as in the time of Moses (Luke i. 71, 74; ii. 38; xix. 11; Matt. xx. 21). But this hope welled up stronger and more tempestuously in the breasts of the Pharisees and in the thoughts of the multitudes of whom they were the leaders. And while the quieter people spoke too of the inner regeneration and transformation which would take place when the Messiah appeared (Luke i. 75, 77, 79), the thoughts of the others had taken a political hue. In the utterances of the prophets the worldly expectations had been like the dross which would be refined away when the end was fulfilled. But instead of a beginning being made before the advent of the Messiah in clearing away the dross, it was just at this time that the moral and religious content of the Messianic prophecies had been buried, so far as the great mass of the people was concerned, under a wave of political dreams and aspirations; and the goal of their longing was now the king who should liberate his people.

And now Jesus? Was He not like a blow in the face when His people turned to Him with such hope and expectation? How could they see in Him the magnificent Son of David? Where was the glorious King of kings? Homeless and without possessions, the Son of God took the form of a servant. He had no place to lay His head. Even at the height of His earthly glory He appeared before his people riding upon the foal of an ass, and at the last He was broken and despised.¹

It may be said that this is exaggeration, and that His appearance was not so entirely without brightness as I have suggested. One might point to the rays of glory which His miracles lent to His person. But can we call it glory? Was there enough glory there for a Messiah? There was a similarity about His miracles; the great majority of

¹ Think, too, how often He hid Himself away from them (John vii. 1, 7 f., 10; viii. 59; xi. 54; Matt. iv. 12). Is there any evidence of splendour here?

them were performed on sick people. There was an avoidance of glitter, of anything to catch the eye, or anything to command respect in His miracles. They were performed in sickrooms (Mark i. 31; v. 42), in small circles of people, before comparatively few spectators; and very often those who had been cured were charged not to say anything about it (Mark i. 34; v. 43). Even in His miracles Jesus was concerned with the individual and with the saving of souls (Mark ii. 5; John v. 8); He did not consider their effect on the mass of the people. Only one of His miracles, the feeding of the five thousand, was concerned with the multitude—and then against His intention (John vi. 15)—and this one did move them, and brought Jesus an hour of glory in the eyes of thousands. But otherwise, to the mass of the people His miracles were not a proof of His Messiahship.¹

¹ For the sake of clearness we would draw attention to the two men who stood with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, Elias and Moses. Both of them had done more glorious miracles than He. What a number of miraculous deeds were performed by the Tishbite! Elijah brought a three-and-a-half years' drought on the land; was fed by ravens; made the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal inexhaustible; raised her dead child to life; brought down fire from heaven on his burnt offering; commanded rain to fall; ran before the King for miles, faster than the monarch's horses; again brought fire from heaven on the King's horsemen; divided Jordan with his cloak, and went up to heaven in a fiery chariot. It is a vivid picture, and the man it portrays almost dazzles our eyes. Still greater and more glorious were the acts of Moses: the plagues of Egypt; the passage through the Red Sea; the maintenance of the Israelites in the wilderness. Here is the same vivid diversity as in Elijah's miracles, but with an added splendour; all the miracles are performed on a multitude of people and before their eyes. If we think of these two, Moses and Elijah, we can understand what sort of wonders the Jews hoped for from their Messiah—miraculous deeds for the whole nation, in great variety and in great numbers. And there was an almost unbroken similarity about Jesus' miracles, which were performed on the unfortunate members of the community, and were closely connected with His preaching, symbols of His spiritual work, healing of the body at the same time as He healed the soul. Origen willingly admits to the Jew of Celsus that the miracles of Moses were greater.

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And so the Jews were not satisfied even with Jesus' miracles. What they had seen only led them to think of Him as a prophet. But first they demanded from Jesus definite proof of His Messiahship. "They desired that He would show them a sign from heaven" (Matt. xvi. 1). The Old Testament prophecies justified this demand (Joel iii. 3 f.). And Jesus refused. Samuel had twice received a sign from heaven in answer to his prayer. Elijah's plea for a sign met with enormous success. "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." The people would have done anything for him on that day (1 Kings xviii. 30). Isaiah offered Ahaz a sign from heaven (Isa. vii. 11). Yet Jesus would not grant His people the same proof of a sign which would dazzle and convince them (Matt. iv. 5 f.). He limited His miracles to a quiet circle of sick folk. But these were not the kind of miracles to help and satisfy Israel, hoping for a king who would deliver them from the humiliations of their present position. So that even in His miracles Jesus was a stumbling-block to the physical sense of His contemporaries.¹

In the eyes of the Jews the co-operation of angels might also have played a prominent part—and should have done so to satisfy them. Examples from the Old Testament encouraged such expectations. Tobias had an angel to accompany him; Daniel in the den of lions and the three men in the fiery furnace had angels to protect them; a whole army of fiery horsemen surrounded Elisha (2 Kings vi. 17). Added to this, at the time when Jesus lived the people were prone to see angelic intervention in all sorts of places. At the Pool of Bethesda it was an angel that troubled the water (John v. 4); when a voice from heaven was heard above Jesus, many were eager

¹ Another point should be specially mentioned here. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. Was such an attitude that of a conqueror? Was that the bearing of one about to rob death of its prey? Elijah and Elisha in the same circumstances were also in a state of agitation, for they were dealing with people who were dear to them (1 Kings xvii. 20; 2 Kings iv. 8), but they held their heads higher, as befitting men in whose hands victory lay.

with the explanation, "An angel spake to Him" (John xii. 29). In the high courts it was considered as something quite usual that a spirit or an angel should have spoken with the accused Paul, and no protest was raised against the assumption (Acts xxiii. 9, cf. also xii. 15, where Rhoda thought that Peter's angel stood before the gate). And as if the examples in the Old Testament and the inclination of His contemporaries to believe in the intervention of angels were not enough, Jesus Himself raised the hope that the angelic hosts would play a powerful part in His life. If they were "His angels," surely they would serve Him; and He definitely allowed His first disciples to look forward to this. "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John i. 51). After that, apart from a colourless remark at the end of the episode in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 11) and in Gethsemane (Luke xxii. 43—and this verse is omitted in the oldest MS.), the narrative is entirely lacking in any angelic appearances or ministrations. The circle into which He was born—Zacharias, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds (Mark i. 11, 26; ii. 9; Matt. i. 20; ii. 13, 19)—all enjoyed such angelic ministrations, and so did His disciples after His death (Acts v. 19; viii. 26; x. 3; xii. 7). And the Lord of angels had to go without them! Does the brush of the artist follow the line of popular expectation in this case?

But let us return to more important matters in which Jesus was too lowly for His people. They wanted a king—and what was He? "A sower went forth to sow." When the days were accomplished the Messiah was to come; He was to bring things as they were to a conclusion: He was to begin the judgement at once—of Israel, and especially of the Gentiles. And after judgement He was to reign as the mighty King of Peace. And what did Jesus do? Instead of bringing any conclusion, He made a new beginning. "A sower went forth to sow." But Israel offered Him their homage and expected Him to take action and to assume the kingly office. It was all very well

for the king's herald to preach and call the people to Him who should come (Luke i. 76) ; but where was the sense in a preaching king? It seemed to the Jews that Jesus had failed to carry out His proper functions. And, impatiently waiting for Him at last to take His rightful place even when the shadow of the Cross loomed before Him, His people asked Him, "How long dost thou make us doubt?" (John x. 24).

* * * * *

Jesus was at the same time too great and too lowly for His people, and therefore as a Messiah He was a stumbling-block to Israel. But there were other ways in which He offended His people's mental susceptibilities. Let us mention just a few of these.

John grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel (Luke i. 80). Like Moses, this prophet of the Lord came out of the solitude of the wilderness, and the same thing was expected of the Messiah. "No man shall see the Son of God before the days of His appearing," says the Fourth Book of Esdras, and in the Targum of Jonathan we find the same sentiment. The evangelist tells us that the Jews declared, "When Christ cometh, no man shall know whence He is" (John vii. 27). And where did Jesus grow up? In the carpenter's shop, in full view of the people. Everyone knew how He was brought up in poverty, they knew His mother and His sisters. What wonder that this was an offence (Mark vi. 3).¹

Another point. It is unquestionably true that the Messiah was expected to come out of Bethlehem—and this Jesus grew up in Nazareth. This little town was considered morally decadent, and had a bad reputation. We might be correct in taking Nathaniel's ready words as a proverb, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46). So that Nazareth, as the home of Jesus, was

¹ It is extremely useful to read Ecclesiasticus xxxviii. 25-33 in this connection.

a stumbling-block to the Jews. But it was also an offence that Jesus should come out of Galilee at all, let alone Nazareth (John vii. 41). And this Galilean was all the more a stumbling-block when one remembers that the rabbis had never been able to agree among themselves as to whether the ten tribes should participate at all in the future rehabilitation of Israel. And now the Messiah Himself was to come from Galilee!

His people were also offended at the attitude Jesus adopted towards the Samaritans. Jesus the son of Sirach, speaking of the foolish people that dwell in Sichem, declares, "There be two nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation" (Ecclus. i. 25). When Jesus was sending forth His disciples on their first mission and bade them "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (Matt. x. 5), He was speaking in a way His people could well understand. But it offended them deeply afterwards that He talked with the Samaritan woman at the well, and with the people of the Samaritan town of Sychar (John iv. 9, 41), and that He stayed in their cities (John iv. 40; Luke ix. 52). And even in a parable He placed a Samaritan above a priest and a Levite of a tribe of Israel (Luke x. 33). So they accused Him, saying, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan?" (John viii. 48).

But there is one thing above all that we must remember. That is the death that Jesus suffered. In all their expectations Israel never thought of a suffering Messiah.¹ They

¹ They did not shrink even from distorting the prophecies about the Messiah being the servant of the Lord to get rid of the thought of the suffering and death of the Messiah. Rabbi Jonathan translates Isaiah liii. 2, so that it reads, "The righteous shall be great before Him, behold, like brancues that bud; and like a tree which sends forth its roots by the streams of water, thus shall the generation of the just multiply in the land, which hath need of Him. His visage shall not be the visage of a common person, neither His fear the fear of a plebeian, but a holy brightness shall be His brightness that every one who seeth Him shall contemplate Him." Most of the sayings are presumed either to allude to the misery of Israel

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might allow that the Messiah might have to suffer for the sins of His people *before* His appearing, that in the time of waiting He might have to lead a life of lowliness among the poor and needy, and that afterwards He might have to undertake terrific battles to liberate His people. In that sense one might speak of a suffering Messiah of the Jews. But what of a Messiah that is conquered in the end? A Messiah who died on a cross? What an incredible idea! When Jesus tried to prepare His people for such a conclusion, they replied, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" (John xii. 34). And when Jesus actually hung on the Cross, the mass of the people was convinced, "This man has been judged of God. What need we further proof?"

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We have seen how, in many different ways, Jesus as the Messiah was an offence to Israel. But two observations in particular seem to make the conclusion we have reached still more certain. The first is a comparison between Jesus and His forerunner. John did no miracles (John x. 41), yet he was held in honour by the people (Matt. xxi. 26). In his dress (Matt. iii. 4, cf. 2 Kings i. 8), in his mode of life, in his type of preaching (Matt. iii. 7-12), he exactly corresponded to what they expected of a prophet. Jesus did many signs, no terrible ones, but miracles of love, which must have assured Him of a loving memory in many hearts, and full of fury the cry went up, Crucify Him! All because His mode of life did not correspond to what they expected of a Messiah.

And the second point. Until He stood before the High or even to the destruction that the Messiah will bring upon the heathen and the backsliders. They shall be despised and rejected, like a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. liii. 3). He shall deliver the mighty men of the people "as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb." After that, can we wonder that Jesus' death should be an offence (in the Greek original text, a scandal) to Israel?

Priest, Jesus *never* proclaimed Himself as the Messiah. Why did He not do so, if He really was the Messiah? Why did He not make public demonstration of the majesty which was His? Jesus felt Himself to be in such a high degree different from all that Israel hoped for, that He could not appropriate the title of Messiah—their favourite party-word. He would have aroused an army of false ideas with this word. And therefore He wanted, by His life, to give it a new meaning, and then at His death to take it on His lips as a confession. But He said of those who recognized Him as the Messiah before He made His testimony, “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. xvi. 17). The conclusion of this chapter is that for Israel’s flesh and blood Jesus was no Messiah, but rather a scandalous person (1 Cor. i. 23). But no Jew who wanted to deck out his Messiah in poetic fancy would ever have given him the form of this Jesus.

But was that which was an offence to Israel precious in the eyes of the Gentiles? Are the colours used in the picture of the Saviour of the world taken from this circle and their ideals?

CHAPTER II

THE FOOLISH SON OF MAN

"Unto the Greeks foolishness."

I CORINTHIANS I. 23

THE aim of this chapter is to introduce us to the Gentile world of thought in the time of Jesus. Was it the conceptions and ideas of the Gentiles that gave birth to the picture we have of Christ? "The Greeks seek wisdom," says the apostle (1 Cor. i. 22), and by the Greeks he means the non-Jewish world of culture of that time. Paul believed the goal of the Gentile thought of the time to be amply characterized in these two words, "Seek wisdom," and so the ideal figure conceived by this thought must have been that of "a man of wisdom." As a matter of fact, anyone conversant with the period is aware that the idea of "the wise man" played a rôle in Graeco-Roman philosophy.

It is true that this expression, the man of wisdom, must not be taken in too narrow a sense. Such a man was concerned also with *practical* wisdom. The wise man was characterized not only by his knowledge but by his whole bearing and his mode of behaviour. His knowledge made his manner of life magnanimous, noble, and great—that is to say, wise.

Now, it cannot be denied that at the time of Christ Israel shared largely in this mode of thought so general in the Gentile world. Much that appeared great, grand, magnanimous, and wise to the Gentiles was regarded by the Jews in the same light.¹ The world of culture at that time had that much in common—a great possession of

¹ Otherwise there would be no sense in regarding this circle of thought as the birthplace of the portrait of Christ. For everyone who has studied the matter realizes that the picture was never drawn by a pagan hand.

common experience bound Jews, Greeks, and Romans together, in spite of their differences. In this chapter, therefore, only that which was peculiarly Jewish will be left on one side. But in those matters where the Jew, as a child of that epoch, held the same conception as his contemporaries, his views must be taken into account; that is, in the interests of this examination. For it must have been he who, if it was done at all, constructed the glorified portrait of Christ out of the material to hand, common to both Jew and Gentile.

We are, accordingly, concerned with the ideal type which humanity as a whole—both Greeks and Jews—made symbolical of their great men, their heroes in that age. What was their conception of the great and wise man? And was Jesus in Graeco-Jewish eyes—in short, in the eyes of the educated man of the time—"the man of wisdom?" Have we here the palette from which came the colours that painted the glowing figure of the Rabbi of Nazareth?

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was a lack of dignity, of greatness, of magnanimity, lack of everything they expected to find in a wise man, made Jesus seem a fool to the educated world of the time. And this contradiction of everything that seemed the world to stamp a man as great is important for us in an apologetic. For nobody paints a man as an offence to all the world to see if they desire to glorify him, and if he is to be exalted, he must not be depicted as foolish. Though we cannot even think of making use of the whole picture which lies here waiting for apologetics, we should still to lay stress on two points. Jesus seemed to them foolish in His attitude towards men, and in His bearing towards the fate which overtook Him. From this point of view, then, let us first consider Jesus' attitude towards His fellow-men.

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"To be always the first, and to outstrive the rest" is the picture old Homer draws of the high-minded man. "A life of honour or a death crowned by fame is the ambition of all noble men," sings Sophocles, echoing the same thought. And in like manner those in Israel who ranked as noble, the Sadducees and Pharisees, tried to make their influence felt—even in such small matters as their method of greeting in the street or in their place at table (Matt. xxiii. 6, 7). "To be always the first and to outstrive the rest!" Did Jesus do this? When He confessed, "I receive not honour from men" (John v. 41), He cut Himself off in the eyes of the world from the company of the noble-minded.

Self-sufficient and self-conscious, the high-minded man, as Aristotle saw him, "goes proud and calmly on his way." Contrast that with the lowly attitude of the Son of man. According to Aristotle, he is high-minded who, "being worthy of great things likewise considers himself worthy of great things." But on the last evening Jesus waited on His disciples like a servant (Luke xxii. 27), going so far in this rôle as to gird Himself with a towel and wash their feet (John xiii. 4 f.). That was the work of a maidservant or the business of a slave.

Aristotle continues further in his description of the high-minded man, "He enjoys with moderation the honours accorded him by great and exceptional men as being deserved or as being less than his deserts." Well, Jesus did not receive many honours of this sort; perhaps the only testimony of the kind He experienced was when Mary of Bethany anointed His feet, and how greatly that act pleased the lowly Jesus! (Matt. xxvi. 13). "But the high-minded man disdains the honour shown him by ordinary people, or on unimportant occasions, for he is above them," says Aristotle. Simon the Pharisee reasoned in the same way when he murmured, "This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, and would thrust her from Him." But Jesus did know what manner of woman

she was, and He kept her by His side, gladdened by the grateful love of even so humble a creature (Luke vii. 39 f.). To the annoyance of the Pharisees He did not disdain the children's shouts of Hosannah in the Temple, as being too slight an honour to be worthy of Him, but drew this unimportant act into prominence (Matt. xxi. 15 f.). Such humility scandalized the world, and He seemed to the people a man of no account.

Authority, fame, recognition by the people, these make up the sunshine which the man of wisdom seeks. But if he does not find it, he is in no wise humbled. Proudly conscious of his merits he salutes himself, basking in his own admiration. The Stoics thoroughly understood such an attitude. Zeno is said to have possessed the complete dignity of the cultured man in the company of his superiors to such a degree that King Antigones declared he had only once in his life been put out of countenance—in a conversation with this philosopher. What about Jesus? Did He put princes out of countenance? On one occasion He stood before a king, and Herod and his courtiers jeered at the lowly Man who seemed so easy a subject for their mockery (Luke xxiii. 11).

A certain renown can be obtained, too, by abjuration and renunciation. Diogenes is not the only one whose vanity peeps through his rags. Exaggerated renunciation always attracts attention. Jesus was "like other men" and His poverty never became a source of vanity. "Like other men!" He was never engaged in big business, but was untiringly faithful in little things. "Great minds may keep themselves aloof from the little happenings of every day—but as long as He was able, the Greatest of all chose everyday life as His working-place." His humility came from the heart, but to His contemporaries this was synonymous with lack of dignity. No one looked for "the man of wisdom" in this garb.

We would still linger on this lowliness of Jesus, viewing it now, however, from another angle. It was particularly Jesus' intercourse with people that, to the

eyes of His contemporaries, revealed in Him a lack of dignity.

Odi profanum vulgus et arceo—I hate the vulgar crowd and keep it far from me, sang Horace some years before the birth of Jesus in one of his best-known odes. Aristotle, too, concurs in this sentiment when he says of his ideal man, "He is frank because he cherishes disdain. And so he speaks truthfully except when speaking in irony; this he does when he has intercourse with the common people." There is no lack of Jewish voices in this same testimony, for the Pharisees said contemptuously, "This people who knoweth not the law are cursed" (John vii. 49). Jews and Gentiles thought it a mark of efficiency to strive upwards; but Jesus did not strive in this way. His heart turned towards the common, simple, uneducated people in such a degree that He thanked God for having revealed Himself unto babes (Matt. xi. 25), and He spoke of it as one of His greatest deeds that the poor have the Gospel preached to them (Matt. xi. 5).

But it seemed to His contemporaries that Jesus' relationship with those who surrounded Him had an even worse aspect. He not only stooped down to the lowly and inferior people, but He drew into His circle those without honour, those who had been branded as hardened sinners (Luke xv. 1; xix. 7; vii. 37). The ancient poet Theognis had already issued a warning against such connections; and one of the favourite verses of Socrates ran, "Never consort with wicked men; live only with the virtuous. For you will learn virtue from the virtuous, but you will lose your own reason with the wicked" (cf. Tobit iv. 18).

But is it not possible to raise up those who have fallen? The ancients shook their heads over such a possibility. "Had the physician received from a god the power to heal the diseases of the senses and cure the vice of mankind, his reward would surely deserve to be a rich one; but never by learning canst thou reform the villain into a righteous man" (Theognis).

And how was it with Jesus? It was no gracious con-

descension He showed to these fallen people, there was no affecting to stoop from His high position to help them. In the eyes of the Oriental He could not have shown more clearly and definitely His love and friendship towards them than in sharing the same table with them, as He did, and eating out of the same dish. He taught His disciples, "Whatsoever city and town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide ye till ye go thence" (Matt. x. 11). But what did He do Himself? He spoke the first word to a traitor like Zacchaeus and asked him for hospitality. No wonder that those among the Jews who stood on their dignity "murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner" (Luke xix. 7; cf. xv. 2 f.; Matt. ix. 11; xi. 19).

We cannot leave this study of Jesus' intercourse with humble people without drawing attention to two more aspects of the subject: Jesus' treatment of children and His attitude towards woman.

The Greeks had a bent towards children. But it was a caricature, connected with the infamy which St. Paul castigates in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. There is a story, too, about children in the Old Testament. But who cares to hear so harsh a tale? Forty-two little boys living in Bethel, who, with the high spirits of childhood, mocked at Elisha's bald head, were eaten by bears in response to the prophet's prayer (2 Kings ii. 23 f.). Jesus' attitude was incomprehensible in a great or a wise man. He had time and affection for children. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," He said, and then He took them in His arms and blessed them (Mark x. 14 f.).

And the other point: He was drawn into conversation with a woman. What learned man among the Jews or what wise man among the Greeks had ever wasted one of his lofty thoughts on a woman? She would have had to be one of quite exceptional mental gifts. But in Jesus' case the woman came from the lower classes of society and was of the commonest type. The foolish Son of man!

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In His humility He stooped so low in His intercourse wherever He went that at last in the eyes of the society of the time He cut Himself off from the circle of the wise and prudent.

But this is not yet the end of His humility. There is still another matter that brought Him into conflict with the ideas of His time with regard to greatness and dignity, that of giving and receiving.

Aristotle says of the noble-minded man, "He is inclined to confer benefits, but he would be ashamed to receive them. For the former is natural to the superior man, but the latter to the inferior man. . . . And he gives more freely than he receives, thus making the donor of the gift his debtor." Aristotle is far from being unique in this conception. Abraham exhibited this fine feeling of the high-minded man when he replied to the King of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet. . . . I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (Gen. xiv. 23). Centuries later Elisha was moved by the same feeling when the captain of the host of the King of Syria pressed him repeatedly to accept a gift as a thank-offering and he replied, "As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, I will receive none" (2 Kings v. 16). Diogenes in his tub was too proud to ask anything of the King of Macedonia. Epamonidas of Thebes lived in miserable circumstances, but his biographer tells us that he would accept nothing from the State except honour. Paul the apostle waxed zealous about his honour. "I have used none of these things [clothing and food from the hands of other people] . . . for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void" (1 Cor. ix. 15). He worked day and night (1 Thess. ii. 9; Acts xviii. 3; xx. 33 ff.) so that he might be able to say, "I am free from all men" (1 Cor. ix. 19). And Jesus? He lived on what was given Him (John xii. 6), not as a beggar perhaps, but as a receiver of alms.

I know of course that Paul did once accept a gift. It

was the Church of Philippi that was allowed to present it. But how proud he was in his reception of it. "Now ye Philippians know also that no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only" (Phil. iv. 15). The congregation at Philippi was to understand that a favour had been conferred upon them. But Jesus had many benefactors. Judas "carried what was given"—that does not sound as though they were particular as to the origin of the gift. Luke speaks expressly about "many others which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke viii. 3). In His humility Jesus accepted from them all, taking no share in the boast of His apostle, "I am free from all men."

"He gives more freely than he receives, thus making the donor of the gift his debtor." Elijah acted according to Aristotle's maxim with the widow of Zarephath. His miracle richly rewarded her for the food and drink she had given him, thus transforming him quickly from a debtor into a benefactor (1 Kings xvii. 14 f.). Jesus always rejected the idea of showing His superiority by making use of His miraculous powers, and all His life He humbly accepted what was given Him.

But enough of the humility of Him who said of Himself, "I am lowly in heart"—and so would not fit into the picture which His contemporaries had created of the high-minded man of wisdom. His foolishness was apparent to them in still another form, in His patience and gentleness.

The prophets of the Lord had come to their people with a simple message. This they set forth, and at the same time they foretold the punishment which would follow should the message be rejected. Jesus pursued people with a patience which was simply unintelligible to both Jews and Gentiles, without pride, condescension, or ill-humour. What a difference there was between Gehazi the thief and Judas the thief! Gehazi stole on one occasion—if it can be called stealing at all, for he merely accepted a gift without the knowledge of his

master—and as a punishment he was smitten with leprosy. Judas stole continuously—and it was a particularly ugly type of theft, from the common purse of the little band—but Jesus patiently kept him by His side (John xii. 6; 2 Kings v. 25 ff.).

Jesus' contemporaries were still more annoyed when, in the face of insult, His patience turned to gentleness. For Jews and Gentiles alike there were only two ways in which insult could be met with dignity; either it could be repaid or, if that were impossible, it could be proudly ignored. In both cases the feeling of superiority was retained, and there was no third way. The law of Moses made the exact repayment of wrong compulsory (Gen. xxi. 23; Deut. xix. 21), and the prophets did likewise (Jer. xi. 18, 21 ff.; xx. 2, 6; xxviii. 10, 16 f.). Socrates denotes it as a manly qualification to overcome friends by well-doing and enemies by doing injury. Aristotle declares that "only a slavish nature will bear insults or overlook them in his companions," and Aesop and Plato do not contradict this view when they say, "It is better to suffer wrong than to do it." For it is no fault, but a sacred privilege to repay insults. And what if it is not possible to exercise the privilege? Then the insults must be proudly ignored. It was not the Stoics who first discovered this wisdom, for Aristotle had already declared in the same connection, "The high-minded man disdains insults, especially those of common men." But Jesus employed neither of these ways in dealing with His persecutors. His hand performed no miracles of revenge, His lips commanded no punishment to overwhelm His opponents; nor did He proudly ignore insult, but condescended to answer even a servant who had struck Him (John xviii. 23). The foolish Son of man! neither in this respect would He fit in with the ideas of His age as to the meaning of real greatness.

We may take this opportunity of saying a word about Jesus' silence (Matt. xxvi. 63; xxvii. 12-14; Luke xxiii. 9). Other men too, acknowledged to be great and wise, have

stood before their judges, but they knew how to hold their own, and to make their superiority felt even by those who accused them. Think of Socrates; during the speech he made in his defence, his accusers finally sat there as though they were the guilty party. Epamonidas, indicted on a matter of life and death, had only one petition to make, that they would carve on his tombstone, "Epamonidas was sentenced to death by the Thebans because he forced the Lacedæmonians to victory at Leuktra . . . and because he would not desist from battle until he had surrounded the city." How that blow rankled! How it drove the blush of shame to the cheeks of the judges! Or read the words which the seven brothers, in the days of the Maccabees, flung in the face of Antiochus the tyrant as they died (2 Macc. vii. 14, 17, 19, 31, 34-37). Jesus held His peace—before the High Priest, before Pilate, before Herod—always there was the same silence. It seemed as though His mind was so bewildered that He did not know how to defend Himself; and a guilty man too keeps silence. Truly the natural man cannot find the way of His glorification in His silence. If only the pride of disdain had flashed from it! But is there any trace of this? Jesus broke His silence too often for that, before Pilate, and to the servant. And the result was that the world held to its opinion—here we have no wise man, no noble man, no man of discernment after the flesh.

Jesus' gentleness towards His opponents was surpassed by another thing which seemed to the world even more foolish. This was His love towards His enemies.¹

¹ People often speak as though love towards an enemy were to be found in the Old Testament, quoting in support of such a view Leviticus xix. 18 (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5; Prov. xxiv. 17). But in these passages "neighbour" certainly means only the other members of the tribe; and Jesus' opinion even of this love natural to the Jews was a low one, for He declared that, from the moral point of view, it was quite worthless (Matt. v. 47). Besides the Old Testament shows clearly enough that even this love to an enemy belonging to the same race was a doubtful matter among the Jews (cf. Ps.

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As we have already mentioned, Socrates asserts that it is a manly virtue to overcome friends by well-doing, but enemies by doing them injury. In full agreement with this, the ancients clung to the idea of revenge. "Is not the disdain sweet that scorns an enemy?" Athene asks Sophocles. The man who did not seek revenge rendered himself contemptible. Revenge was a part of righteousness. In the time of Jesus, Israel may almost be said to have lived on revenge. In Wallace's *Ben Hur*, Simonides says, "Revenge is the Jew's right, it is the law," and Ben Hur replies, "A camel, yea even a dog remembers the wrong done to it." And here the novel has caught the spirit of the age. Both among Jews and Gentiles, however, this thirst for revenge would admit of an enemy being spared if he were in distress. "I hated when it was noble to hate," says Sophocles, and again, "I pity even mine enemy when he is in distress." Aristotle voices the general opinion when he says, "It is unworthy of a man of culture to render himself strong at the expense of the weak." The sacred history of the Old Testament offers examples enough of this high-mindedness towards an enemy who has been brought low (2 Kings vi. 22; 2 Chron. xxviii. 15; 1 Sam. xxiv. 6; 2 Sam. iv. 11; Prov. xxv. 21; Exod. xxiii. 4 f.). But otherwise little was known of love towards an enemy, retaliation being the ideal.

In the course of time, however, experience taught that it was not always possible to retaliate, and among the Stoics we often meet with a cool resignation or renunciation in this as in many other matters. "It affects me not." "A man's only enemy is he who does him injury," reflects Epictetus, "but if thou renounce visible possessions, no man can do thee injury, thou canst have no enemy." In the same way Diogenes had already

xxviii. 3, 4, with the expression "neighbour," and our further observations on the subject). But so far as the foreigner was concerned, the traditional addition, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy" (Matt. v. 43, a command, not merely permission given), fully expressed the spirit of the Old Testament (cf. Deut. xv. 3; xxiii. 20 f.).

asserted, "He who is in need of deliverance must seek either a true friend or a deadly enemy." Plutarch wrote an essay on the art of making use of one's enemies. By means of such wiles an enemy was rendered non-existent, enmity becoming a thing of no importance. But this indifference was certainly not love.

In Israel, too, retaliation could not always be indulged in. But the religious man had discovered another way of proving his superiority over his enemy. Where his own hand was impotent, he left revenge to God (Deut. xxxii. 35; Judges xvi. 28). A petition for revenge could after all be made to Him (Rom. xii. 19; Eccles. xxviii. 1). We need only think of the Imprecatory Psalms to be reminded of the most intense outburst expressive of the thirst for revenge known to us (Ps. xciv. 1; xxviii. 4; lviii. 7 ff.; lxix. 23 ff.; cix. 6 ff.). But the books of the prophets too are filled with prayers that God would avenge His people (Jer. xi. 20; xv. 15; xviii. 23; xx. 12, etc.). Take even one of these—for instance, in the 17th chapter of Jeremiah: "Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction." Then contrast it with the 18th chapter of John, the scene before the High Priest. Or, a still stronger contrast: compare the cry for revenge uttered by the saints of the Old Testament (cf. 2 Sam. xxii. 48; Neh. vi. 14; Eccles. xxv. 10, not to speak of the Book of Esther, which is full of the idea of revenge) with the prayer of Jesus in the hour of His death. The foolish Son of man! Even here, in the eyes of the world, He contradicted the ideal which the human heart had set up of true greatness and of superiority over the enemy.

Jesus ranks as a fool in His relationship with the children of men. We should like to close this part of our study with a word on Jesus' manner of serving men. Here too, in the ancient world, there were two ways in which the high-minded man might approach his fellows. He could

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scorn and disdain them, avoiding them, aloof and self-sufficient, as though for him the world did not exist. Or he could dwell amongst them, but as one who ruled them for their good.

The seven wise men of Greece, with the exception of Milesiers Thales, were all leaders in the State. One of the sayings attributed to Socrates, though without proof, runs, "The philosopher [the man of discernment] must also be a ruler." Plato says, "If the philosophers are not also the rulers, and if the power of the State and philosophy go not hand in hand, endless is the suffering for the State and for mankind." Through the mouth of Telemachus, Homer sings in his naïve way, "Gladly would I accept it if Zeus sent me power to rule! Or think you this is the worst fate that can befall? Truly there is no evil in ruling."

The Jews thought likewise. Pharisees and Sadducees, the Jewish "men of discernment," occupied the governing positions as a matter of course. This was the place fitting to men of culture. Besides, the well-being of the people seemed to demand it, for thus only could the citizens be compelled, by force if necessary, to do what was good for them. Nehemiah, in his time, took the same line (Neh. xiii. 7 ff., 21, 25). Mattathias and his friends realized the wisdom of it (1 Macc. ii. 44-48). And now came Jesus, whose service of others had no prospect of gain: "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (Matt. xx. 28). Once, in the cleansing of the Temple, He too employed force, as Nehemiah had done (John ii. 15); that was not without effect, being in keeping with the spirit of the great (v. 18). But He never did so again, never again employed force in His dealings with men, but entered the path of service which led nowhere—the foolish Son of man! How could He hope, along such a path and in the space of a lifetime, to attain greatness in the worldly sense?

* * * * *

THE FOOLISH SON OF MAN

But there is a second way in which Jesus violated the ideal treasured in the hearts of His contemporaries; a second point at which He exhibited a lack of majesty, of greatness, of high-mindedness—in short, a lack of everything expected of a wise man. To the world of the time Jesus seemed a fool in His bearing under the fate which overtook Him.

In the time of which we are speaking, reason saw two ways in which the spirit of man could attain mastery over the outside world: once again, this outside world could be either dominated or ignored. At first, with the recklessness of youth, Greek philosophy tried the first of these ways. But when this led to disappointment, the Stoics took the wisdom of Diogenes as their maxim: disdain of the outside world was to aid the mind to a position of dignity, raising it above everything which disquieted the sensibilities or emotions. Epictetus compares life to a banquet and describes its aim: "If thou take nothing of that which is offered thee, but regard it with indifference, thou shalt be not only a guest but a ruler in company with the gods. In this way Diogenes, Heraclitus, and others like them, earned the epithet divine which was given them." And in order that his preaching should not outrun his practice, this erstwhile slave, whose textbook ranked as the highest in its moral teaching among all the books of the ancients, lived in the utmost poverty even after he was freed, a bench, a pillow, and a lamp being his only possessions.

Among the Jews, too, we find the same two ways by which the human spirit attempted to establish its superiority over the outside world. David and Solomon were brilliant figures, trampling nations underfoot; the hoped-for Son of David was to excel His ancestors in this respect. There were also the wild, savage figures in camel-skin and leather girdle—even before the days of the Tishbite—whose majesty consisted in scorning everything terrestrial. But what about Jesus? Where can we place Him? His attitude is too reminiscent of the

broad mediocrity which has not much of its own, but gladly receives anything that offers. He accepted an invitation to a wedding (John ii); He enjoyed every harmless pleasure (Luke xv. 23, 25b—in the middle of a very serious parable); He annoyed the Pharisees by taking His place at the rich man's table (Luke v. 29; xix. 2, 5); He did not reject the precious, almost extravagant gift of ointment (John xii. 5); He cheerfully wore a valuable coat (John xix. 23); He was never proof against requests and entreaties, yet He never acted the part of a hero in the sense in which the world understood it. If He was tired, He sat down (John iv. 6); if He was hungry, He did His best to satisfy His hunger, even when He was on a journey (Matt. xxi. 18 f.); when He was thirsty He asked for drink to quench His thirst. Alexander once magnanimously poured out a helmetful of water when his tongue was cleaving to the roof of his mouth. This Jesus twice asked for a drink in circumstances in which the noble, high-minded man would rather have expired of thirst; He asked a Samaritan woman, and He asked His executioner.

We have spoken of the dominating position which the wise man of ancient times was expected to take up in enjoying or making use of the outside world. But he was expected, too, to show his mastery of this world by the way in which he refused to allow his heart to be deeply moved by outside circumstances.

Five days before his triumph, Lucius Emilius Paulus, the conqueror of Perseus, King of Macedonia, lost his youngest son; and five days after the victory his eldest son died. In the usual speech to the people, the bereaved man assured them, "I prayed that if misfortune should come, the gods would visit me and not the country. My prayer has been answered. My grief would have been still deeper had the gods stricken you." This may sound like bombast and self-aggrandizement, but one sees that it was what was obviously expected of any man who wished to be considered "great" at that time. "When

you meet someone in mourning," says Epictetus, "do not fail to console his grief with words of reason, even if you must weep with him. But forbear to let your inner heart be touched." "He groaned in spirit"—that is how the translators of the Gospels have expressed the deep emotion which gripped Jesus at the grave of Lazarus, forcing the tears to His eyes (John xi. 33). And He wept too over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41), against the advice given by Epictetus to the wise: "The way to freedom lies in ignoring those things which we cannot control." Horace says that the best, perhaps the only way to attain peace of mind is to admire nothing and to be roused by nothing. Jesus was so deeply moved by the death of John that He departed into the wilderness, there to recover peace of mind (Matt. xiv. 13). In all these cases He showed Himself too overwhelmed by the rush of events to be considered great or wise in the judgement of His time.

Let us turn now to a very important question, that of the courage of Jesus. Courage (valour) is one of Plato's four cardinal virtues. When measured by the rule of His contemporaries, Jesus appeared in some degree at least—though not altogether—to lack courage. We can best study, first, His courage in life and then His courage in death.

The greatest man of endurance known to the Greeks was a man of courage. Odysseus lost much—almost everything—but he retained his courage, his fortitude. "Should the gods pursue me through the darkest sea, yet will I bear it; my heart has accustomed itself to suffering." Aristotle admits that the noble-minded man does not "put himself into danger for small matters"—he is too conscious of his own worth—yet he adds, "But for the sake of great matters he braves perils, reckoning his life as nothing, as though it were not worth living." A man should be ashamed of fear. But when the trust in God experienced by the pious is added to human bravery, men are born to whom fear is an unknown

word. In this sense Paul was a brave man. He has raised a monument to his own courage in the 11th chapter of his Second Epistle to the Corinthians (v. 24-27)—not out of vanity, but in his own defence. In Jesus, on the contrary, we seem to meet with a caution which does not altogether accord with the valour of a man. He preferred to stay in Galilee; He escaped into desert places; He even sought out the Gentile country, constrained in every case by this prudence (Matt. iv. 12; xii. 15; Mark xi. 19; Luke xxi. 37; John vii. 1; xi. 54). We are even confronted by the ugly word "secretly" (John vii. 10) and, just as bad, "He hid Himself from them" (John viii. 59; xii. 36). Later, His apostle raised a protest when he was to be tried in secret, probably feeling that such "secrecy" was derogatory (Acts xvi. 37). To Nehemiah it seemed a sin to hide (Neh. vi. 11, 13). Aristotle declares roundly that "secrecy is known only to the fearful." Yet Jesus practised it willingly. His contemporaries might well deplore the lack of majesty and greatness in this. He appeared to lack courage in His living.¹ Was His courage more evident when He came to die?

We see in the pagan world splendid examples of courage in the face of death. Sophocles' words may well serve as a motto for this: "To live gloriously and to die gloriously, these are the duties of the noble man."

Think of the warriors—of an Epamonidas who, in great agony, left the steel in his wound until he received news of victory, when he tore it out, a shout of triumph on his pale lips: "I have lived long enough, for I die unconquered!" of a Leonidas with his three hundred companions, who anointed and bedecked themselves when they knew that death was hard upon them; of an Agag, who strode before Samuel to receive the deathblow, with shining eyes and the brave words on his lips, "Surely

¹ "Courage is the most widespread of all human virtues," Chamberlain, *Foundations*.

the bitterness of death is past" (1 Sam. xv. 32). Leaving the warriors, let us think of the ancient heroes of the faith. Here we might cite Samson, bringing down the pillars of the Philistines in ruins about his own head (Judges xvi. 29). *Impavidum ferient ruinae*, let the ruins cover a fearless man. Then there were heroes in the time of the Maccabees. How many people died joyfully in those days (2 Macc. vi. 27; vii. 12; 30, 40)! Both the Jewish and the pagan world were courageous in dying. Yet there was a difference between them, a slight intensifying in the one. What Bulwer-Lytton says in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, in the fine description he gives of a pagan and a Christian, might well be quoted here, with slight alteration: "The pagan did not flinch, but the Jew shouted for joy." The latter had better things in prospect (2 Macc. vii. 36).

And how did Christ confront death? In Gethsemane the struggle was prolonged through three acts; and yet only resignation was attained at the end of the second and again at the close of the third. Did Socrates, the dying Stoic, not fare better than this? Do we see in him that dread of death which is apparent not only in Gethsemane but in words such as those quoted by Luke, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Matt. xxvi. 37 f.; Luke xii. 50)? Jesus' intercourse with the disciples was that of a friend who *needed* friends: "Tarry ye here and watch with me" (Matt. xxvi. 38). Aristotle voiced the opinion of his time when he said, "To be high-minded a man should have need of no one, or hardly so." In the hour of his death Socrates was so great that though his disciples were in need of him, he had no need of them. Jesus in His last hours broke down altogether; He stumbled under the weight of the Cross; He called for water; and then came that cry of anguish from His very soul, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Did that look like courage in the face of death? Was the disciple above his Master when, in similar circum-

stances, the face of Stephen shone like the face of an angel? (Acts vi. 15).¹

The light on this question becomes still more unfavourable when we consider what this highly eulogized death meant—the redemption of a world. “It is sweet to die for one’s country”—the noblest sons of the ancient world rendered these words into deeds with a joyful spirit. To take only one example: when Leonidas learned through the oracle that “either the city must fall or a king must die,” he went forth with shining eyes to offer himself as a sacrifice. But Jesus was to die for mankind—should not that have been sweeter still? And yet He was so feeble of heart. Even in the reflections of John, which come nearest to this spirit of joyfulness (John xii. 24; xiv. 27–30; xv. 13–16), a certain apprehension and hesitation is still evident (John xii. 27). Was this Man to be considered by His contemporaries high-minded, wise, and noble? No, He seemed to them a fool in His submission to the fate which overtook Him.

And now, at the end of this chapter on the foolish Son of man, let us consider still one more point: Jesus’ conduct towards His mother. How deliberately Jesus overstepped the bonds that unite child and parent, brother and sister! Had not God Himself knit together these natural human ties? And here was Jesus, asserting that He had come to unloose them! The stern Tishbite once willingly permitted the chosen Elisha to return home for the last time to embrace his father and mother in farewell (1 Kings xix. 20). But this Jesus would not even allow a son to go home to bury his father (Luke ix. 59; Tobit iv. 3). To what lengths would not the people of these ancient days go, that they might sprinkle a handful of earth on the dead body of a loved one? Is not the pious fame of an Antigone unfading in such circumstances? (cf. Tobit ii. 3, 9). How could the revolu-

¹ The early opponents of Christianity, a Celsus or a Julian, pointed scornfully at this Jesus, who trembled and faltered in the face of death.

tion thus introduced by Jesus into the religious and moral thought of the time put this Nazarene, in the eyes of His contemporaries, among the noble men of the age? In answer to the supplications of his mother, Coriolanus turned back when he had reached the very walls of Rome. Among the Jews it had always been recognized that great promises awaited those who honoured their parents (Exod. xx. 12; Eph. vi. 2). On one occasion the mother of Jesus also thought to exercise her mother-right over her Son, at the wedding in Cana. But in plain terms Jesus refused to acknowledge any such authority (John ii. 4). A second meeting with His mother appears to us still harsher. He was in Capernaum, preaching in a house there. She stood outside—probably after a journey from Nazareth—and, desiring to speak to Him, she sent in a message. And what did Jesus do? He answered the messenger, "Who is My mother?" Then stretching out His hand towards the disciples He said, "Behold My mother!" (Matt. xii. 46 ff.). Perhaps later on He went out to see her? But even if He had gone immediately, what a harsh prelude these words were to a meeting with the woman who had borne Him!

Jesus appeared to a number of people after His resurrection, the first to whom He showed Himself being a woman in need of comfort. But nothing is told us of any appearance granted to His mother, who needed comfort more than any other. Could such conduct possibly have seemed noble to the human eyes of His contemporaries?

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In this chapter we set out to prove that, at least in some respects, the likeness we have of Jesus was not invented by a grateful company among the Jews and Gentiles, enthusiastically attributing to Him all they knew of what was humanly speaking noble, great, and wise. I think it has been made clear that the portrait of Jesus contains nothing of the wisdom of His time.

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But is it perhaps possible to prove that there was a small circle of people, a kind of sect arising in those days which cultivated a strange preciousness, a kind of perversion of sentiment? What if Jesus were the mature fruit out of such a singular little garden of human emotion? What if the qualities considered admirable by this peculiar circle had been attributed to Him, and under the loving, adorning hands of this little company He had grown into the form which we now have? Would not such a figure turn out to be the work of men's hands?

Let us try in the following chapter to find an answer to this question.

(See Appendix p. 461 for a study of "Two Passions," the death of Socrates and the death of Jesus.)

CHAPTER III

THE OPPOSITION WITHIN HIS OWN CIRCLE

"When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

ISAIAH LIII. 2

"Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"

MATTHEW XI. 3

CERTAINLY there is one way of removing the apologetic significance we have attributed to that which gave offence in Jesus. It would disappear altogether if it could be proved that there was a circle of people of most peculiar views and strange ideals by whom the likeness of Jesus had been minted. Then we could say, this is the little garden in which the portrayed figure of Jesus was planted and tended by the devoted love of a little group of people, and where it grew quite naturally—the plant was not of heavenly origin. But a single criticism makes such an idea untenable. It need only be pointed out that the very circle of men which has given us the likeness of Jesus was itself sharply at variance with it. This is the position which we now mean to study: Jesus stood in contradiction not only to the spirit of His age, but to the spirit of His disciples. The portrait painted of Him was continually at variance with their ideas.

To begin with, the disciples had to reconcile themselves to His origin. The fact that He came out of Nazareth roused the opposition not only of the Pharisees, learned in the law (John vii. 52: "Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet"), and of the people whose leaders they were (v. 41: "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?"), but forced to the lips of the apostle the question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46).

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But the disciples were still more sharply opposed to the way in which He made His first public appearance. For the Twelve, more than anyone else, hoped that He would redeem Israel. They believed that they had already caught gleams of the kingly diadem from under the cloak of His humility. The sons of Zebedee spoke out frankly, "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory" (Mark x. 37); but the other disciples, too, had cherished this thought often enough in their hearts (Mark ix. 34). The indignation aroused by the Sons of Thunder was nothing but envy that these two should stretch out their hands more greedily than the others. Why did Jesus so urge the disciples to depart quickly on the evening of the feeding of the multitude, finding no peace until He had got rid of them? (Mark vi. 45). Was it not because He knew their opposition to His service of others and realized how their hearts were set on domination? And it was on that very evening that the people were to come and desire to make Him their king (John vi. 15). He had to remember for the Twelve the prayer He Himself had taught them, "Lead us not into temptation."

It was almost unavoidable that this false expectation of the kingship of Jesus should be the source of much of their opposition to the Master. They could understand neither His interest in little things nor His humility and gentleness. They regarded Him continually with eyes that expected to see Him throw off the cloak of lowliness at any moment and appear in regal splendour, and so they must have felt that He was only being burdened and hindered by the crowds which pressed around Him seeking healing.

"Send her away," they urged, when the woman of Canaan ran after Him (Matt. xv. 23). "Hold your peace!" they said to the blind man by the wayside (Luke xviii. 39). For it seemed to them that the Messiah had something better to do than to take up His time with the beggars, whose importunity is known to everyone in the East.

OPPOSITION WITHIN HIS OWN CIRCLE

Their hearts were filled with antagonism when they saw Him wasting His thought on a woman (John iv. 27); and when the people dared even to trouble Him with their children, they interfered, driving the mothers and their little ones away, with a feeling of righteous indignation (Mark x. 13).

And then His humility. It was probably not only Peter who protested against the washing of their feet on that last evening (John xiii. 6). But he, so ready with his tongue, gave expression to what they were all feeling. To all of them this example of service from One whom they expected to be an example of kingliness (Isa. ix. 6; xi. 3, 4) was quite unintelligible.

Nor could they understand His gentleness. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked"—that was what they had learned to hope from their Messiah, and it was this expectation that led them to urge, as a matter of course, "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" (Luke ix. 54). On the last evening they could not understand His sadness when they, full of confidence, showed Him their two swords (Luke xxii. 38), and tried to rouse Him from His indifference, saying, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" (Luke xxii. 49).

It was just in the last days of His life that their resistance reached its highest point. Their Lord had indeed tried to prepare them for these days, but of what use was it that He had spoken to them of His approaching death? Peter even began to rebuke Him (Mark viii. 32). And it can be said of all the disciples that "they understood not that saying" (Mark ix. 32). It surpassed their comprehension as something that every prophecy of the coming Messiah laughed to scorn.

The likeness we have of Him in those days was engraved under strong protest from the circle of disciples. Jesus had seen to it that, under this intense opposition, their belief should not be broken completely. That was why,

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when the announcement of His approaching death seemed to cast doubt on all the most glorious prophecies, He appeared before the dazzled eyes of His three chosen disciples in full accord with the representations of the law and the prophets, as a guarantee that the prophecy would be completely fulfilled (Mark ix. 2). And very early He had spoken to them of the traitor—for no other purpose, as He Himself explained, than to preserve them from the doubt of His own person which the advent of that incomprehensible night might arouse (John xiii. 19).

The care thus taken by Jesus was far from unnecessary. When the time came, they were all offended in Him (Matt. xxvi. 31, 56). Even on the day of resurrection (Luke xxiv. 11), and later, too, the antagonism can very clearly be seen (John xx. 25). He Himself helped them over the difficulty by intercession (Luke xxii. 32); and again when He appeared to them as a living witness. Thus it was Jesus Himself who raised in the reluctant hearts of His disciples the likeness of the Messiah which was such an offence to them.

* * * * *

If proof is needed of the strong opposition from His own disciples under which the likeness of Jesus was formed, we must not refrain from noting the use made of the Scriptures by the apostles and evangelists. These men, believing the Scripture, had to prove the Messiahship of their Master out of the Old Testament. His likeness was indeed almost a scandal in comparison with these expectations. It was therefore of the greatest importance that on Easter Day Jesus expounded the Scriptures to two of His disciples in His long talk with them on the lonely road to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 32), giving a new significance to the well-known prophecies, laying His finger on those which had been neglected, and calming their anxious, offended hearts by the use of these very Scriptures. From that time onwards the disciples strove to vindicate out of the Old Testament

the offensive likeness of Jesus, proving that God had willed His life to be what it was, and thus attempting to silence the antagonism in their own natural hearts as well as in the hearts of others. In doing so, the coercive twist which they more than once gave to the Old Testament prophecies corresponded exactly to the compulsion which they themselves had suffered under the offence of the likeness of Jesus.

The quotations from the Scriptures which we have in mind are only to be understood after painful searching. That such far-fetched quotations from the Old Testament were discovered at all was only due to the fact that the characteristics in question in the likeness were so strange to the disciples. The questing urge of an anxious heart longing for reassurance made it transform what was repulsive to it into something acceptable to itself and others. Nothing puts more clearly the process that took place than John's phrase, "These things understood not the disciples at first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him" (John xii. 16; cf. also xx. 9). When His life lay open before them in all its particulars, the words of Old Testament prophecy which they had sought and so happily found, and which they had never considered before, were an additional solace to their hearts.

Let us look and see how the minds of the disciples worked, setting down some instructive examples. The *Nazarene* was an offence to the natural man. Did not prophecy speak clearly of Bethlehem? When was there any mention of Galilee? Yet God does not lie; and so they searched through the Old Testament for the Nazarene until Matthew discovered it in the *nezer* (rod) of Isaiah (Isa. xi. 1; Matt. ii. 23).¹ Thus, with considerable skill, they justified the Galilean. Were the lowly circumstances of the childhood of Jesus worthy of the Son of God? The flight into Egypt? The fact that innocent babes were destroyed by a murderer's hand on His account? But

¹ Or else in the *nasir* of Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 16).

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through Hosea, God had said of His people Israel, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son" (Hos. xi. 1). And in Jeremiah (xxxi. 15), Rachel, as the ancestress of the people, wept for the sons of Israel slain in the mountains. Now it sounded like a hint which might be made to fit in with the reprehensible fate which befell Jesus (Matt. ii. 15, 18).

It had been an offence that Jesus appeared first in Galilee; it was still stranger that, when He appeared, He was rejected. In Isaiah (ix. 1 ff.; Matt. iv. 12) they discovered a witness to His early ministry in Galilee, and there too an explanation of the inexplicable disbelief He encountered (Isa. liii. 1, 6, 9; John xii. 38-40).

No one had thought of Him as a physician, no one had expected Him to spend so much of His precious time among the miserable, the sick, the epileptic. But the heart which resisted the facts was soothed by a word from the Scriptures as far-fetched as Isa. liii. 4 (Matt. viii. 17).¹

What about the fact that He was so shamefully delivered into the hand of the enemy by one of His own disciples? The death of the traitor was taken to prove that his treachery was ordained by God and had been foretold by the psalmists and the prophets (Ps. lxix. 26, cix. 8; Acts i. 20; Zech. xi. 12 f.; Matt. xxvii. 9).

It is absurd to take the contrary view, as Strauss and others do, asserting that because Isaiah spoke of the *nezer* or Moses of the *nasir*, therefore Jesus had to come out of Nazareth; that His healing powers were invented because of Isa. liii. 5; His body left unmolested on the Cross because of Exod. xii. 46; that Zech. xii. 10 led to the story of the piercing with the lance, and Ps. xxii. 16 to the cry from the Cross, "I thirst." This could not

¹ Even the first evangelist, learned in the Scriptures, can find no more applicable prophetic utterance. So hard was it to discover in the Old Testament any direct prophecy of Jesus' healing powers. (Isa. xxxv. 5 only gives a picture of the rehabilitation of Israel in the sense of the expectations of the people.)

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possibly be the case. These incidents in the life of Jesus were never invented to suit a belief common among the people, but, on the contrary, under the conviction that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Old Testament was construed and explained and interpreted until those characteristics which were an offence to the hearts of men were justified by the prophecies. The evangelists did not shrink from employing a certain arbitrariness in this searching and exposition in order to overcome the opposition in men's offended hearts.¹

* * * * *

There is, however, a third point which must be noted, if we are fully to understand the opposition to the likeness of Jesus which was raised among His disciples. All their lives the figure of Jesus seemed, in some respects, strange to them; they never quite got accustomed to it.

Of course, I am not thinking here of the natural sinfulness of the Twelve. It is quite clear that not even an apostle was free from sin. But that is something different. These disciples never fully grasped or comprehended their Master's thoughts, and this in particular shows in what a high degree the likeness of this Man was unnatural and strange to them, how little relation it bore to their own hearts: all their life long they were at variance with it.

This idea is in no way a monstrous one. Everyone admits, for instance, that with regard to doctrine, James never attained, as far as we can see, to the full understanding of the gift of salvation which Paul possessed.

¹ The interpolation by the fourth evangelist, "Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled," coming after the cry, "I thirst," seems to me to be due to the same desire to overcome opposition. So this cry, on which Celsus poured scorn to Origen ("He could not endure thirst as men inferior to Him have often done"), and which John himself was not easy about, was justified in the same way in which Origen later justified it to the scoffing pagan: "Behold, it was needful that the prophecy should be fulfilled."

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Why should not a similar backwardness in grasping an idea be allowed to an apostle of Jesus with regard to moral questions? As a matter of fact, it is, fundamentally, much more easily possible, because in such questions the heart is so deeply involved. Though the Spirit of God did not constrain the hearts of the Twelve, but subjected them to a lengthy process of sanctification, their reason would still be involved in the process. But in the second instance as in the first, it cannot be expected that in this world at least the same conclusion should be reached in every case by every person.

It seems to me it can be proved that, in the life of the apostles, there are a number of features from which we must conclude that these men had not yet understood the example of their Master. Jesus did not once employ His miracles as a means of punishment. Is it not strange that the chief apostle, in one of the very first of his miracles (Acts v. 9; cf. Paul's first miracle), sank back into the ways of the miracle workers of the Old Testament? (See the parallel case in 2 Kings v. 25 ff.) It is true that God in His omniscient mercy knew how to turn Peter's act into a blessing. ("Great fear came upon all the church.") But unless we employ considerable subtlety it is difficult to dissociate this miracle from the words of rebuke uttered by Jesus, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of" (Luke ix. 55). Then He had admonished the Son of Thunder, "I will not that ye command fire from heaven to come down and consume them"; now, after the Ascension, He allowed Peter to stand on his own feet and act as he thought fit. Think, too, of the apostle who answered back when he was rebuked, and threatened when he was made to suffer (Acts xxiii. 3 ff.). Paul's reproof was anything but meek—"Thou whited wall!" he said to the man who struck him. His threats were forceful—"God shall smite thee." And when those that stood by protested, he only made excuse for having abused the high priest. This same apostle, in writing to Timothy, singled out a personal

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enemy—"Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works."¹

Even if this were only a wish, or perhaps a prophetically apt pronouncement, there is nothing parallel to such scenes in the life of the Saviour, though there is in the lives of the prophets and their contemporaries (2 Sam. iii. 39; Jer. xx. 2 ff.).

In Revelation there goes forth a cry of revenge from under the altar, from the souls of them that were slain, "How long, O Lord . . . dost Thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" In excuse for this it is said that they were concerned in upholding the renown, sacredness, and verity of their Lord. But were not Jesus and Stephen concerned with those same things? And yet they prayed, "Father, forgive them." "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

Even a passage such as 2 Thess. i. 6 ff. does not attain to the standard set by Christ. Certainly, the justice of God is to be upheld and lauded, as sacred and awful. But Christ looked on the coming judgement with a heart full of pity and sorrow, while Paul writes of it not without personal satisfaction.

In Rom. xii, what is the highest victory claimed over wrath and enmity? Is it not indifference, combined with the comforting thought that vengeance belongs to the Lord, and that God will repay? (v. 19). But Jesus pled with God to refrain from vengeance. How they misunderstood the likeness!²

In the First Epistle of Peter (1 Pet. ii. 21) the apostle sees before his eyes the patient figure of Jesus, and as he gazes he relinquishes all threats and maledictions. Yet he cannot refrain from suggesting that a man, petitioning in love, should not forego the expectation of the

¹ Again Old Testament examples (Ps. lxxix. 10; xciv. 1).

² In the Jewish book of *Sohar* there is a passage exactly corresponding to Paul's words. "A man shall not hasten to take revenge; it is better that he leave vengeance to the Lord" (cf. Deut. xxxii. 43; 1 Cor. xvi. 22; Gal. i. 9 are also below the Christian level).

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punishment of his enemies; in fact, he says that Jesus too "committed Himself to Him that judgeth rightly." But this is certainly not the case. On the contrary, Jesus prayed His Father, "Condemn them not!"

Stephen only, in this respect, stands on the same lonely heights as the Master (Acts vii. 59).

Of course, the circle of the disciples was not *consciously* opposed to the Master. In the days of His flesh they may have been so (going even to the length of rebuking Him (Matt. xvi. 22); but no apostle wittingly opposed Him after His ascension. Yet, even in the days after Pentecost, the disciples failed now and then to cut themselves loose from the ideals fostered by the Old Testament in which they had been brought up. But this is a fresh and particularly strong proof for us that the Jesus of the Gospels could not have originated in the inventive power of the Twelve, but rather came amongst them while their ears were still shut and their eyes unopened to His supernatural loveliness.

* * * * *

But now we come to a still sharper inconsistency: one of those who stood closest to Him was led astray; one belonging to His most intimate circle came to grief through Him. How could this figure have been invented, if the likeness had been formed by the company of Jesus' disciples?

What offence there must have been in the advent of Jesus when John the Baptist, who had been so clearly enlightened concerning Him (John i. 27, 29), and who had even received confirmation in a vision (John i. 32-34), could not accept Him as He was, but began to doubt whether he had heard God's voice aright! (Matt. xi. 3).

In the very first days after Jesus had appeared from His seclusion in Galilee, John began to shake his head over Him (Matt. iii. 14). It seemed to him strange that this Man should come to him for baptism. John's baptism by water had a sharply defined character—it was a

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baptism of repentance (Matt. iii. 11); the people were to come and confess their sins (Matt. iii. 6), and then the baptism became in effect a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Mark i. 4). But why was Jesus among this crowd of waiting people? What had He to do with a baptism of repentance or a confession of sin? And should the Messiah bow His head before His herald? But the Baptist silenced his doubts on that day, deciding to wait and see what happened (Matt. iii. 15).

Then there came the days when Jesus with His healing hand went among the sick, unhappy, and distressed multitudes. Without doubt He was John's superior in this respect, for the Baptist did no miracles (John x. 41). But healing was not one of the Messiah's duties. God must be with this Man, certainly, but powerful signs of the wonder-working of God did not prove that He was the Messiah. And John still waited.

Meanwhile Jesus' healing activities continued, and His preaching began to take on a character which confused John. He started the work of the Kingdom as though from the beginning, or, to express the whole offence of His method in the words of the parable, Jesus went forth as a sower. John had indeed meant to do that himself—as a powerful preacher of repentance to scatter the seed from which a prepared people should arise (Luke i. 17). But Jesus was to come as the Lord of the harvest, to fan the floor, burn the chaff, and garner the wheat (Matt. iii. 12). The days of the Messiah were to be days of reckoning. First of all a dismal day—the day of judgement. For some there was to be a baptism of fire, for the others a baptism of the Holy Ghost (Matt. iii. 7, 10, 11). After that, a glorious day, glorious as the dawn, the day of the setting up of the Kingdom (Matt. iii. 2). Through the centuries God had spoken so often and in such various ways by the prophets, and the man who gathered together all the earlier prophecies did not expect more words from Him that should come after him, but deeds. And now He came as a sower! So John's

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opposition to Jesus' methods increased until he became completely baffled; and the doors of the Messiah's Kingdom remained shut against him, at least during his *earthly existence*.

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This antagonism to the methods of Jesus led Judas to a much more irreparable break with his Master. We said of John that Jesus as a sower was an offence to him. It was Jesus as a servant that led to the downfall of Judas.

John the Evangelist gives us two hints as to the inner development of this unhappy man. The first dates from the day when many of Jesus' disciples went back, and walked no more with Him (John vi. 66). It was then that Judas broke with the Master. Jesus realized it clearly, saying sorrowfully, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John vi. 70). Let us try to grasp the state of affairs on that day.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that all the disciples, in becoming Christ's followers, believed that He would fulfil the national and political hopes of the nation. In this they were similar to other pious persons of the time (Luke i. 71, 74). With such an aim in their minds, and knowing that He had chosen them to be His companions, they must have had their own ambitions, hopes, and worldly desires. Thinking of the approaching days of the Messiah's kingdom, they disputed among themselves by the way who should be the greatest (Mark ix. 34). The Sons of Zebedee already wanted to secure for themselves the seats nearest the throne (Mark x. 37). Judas, too, thinking of the days to come, had often silently woven for himself a splendid tissue of glittering hopes and expectations. He had one special gift in a direction foreign to the simple men in the circle of the disciples, and in which the children of this world generally surpass the children of light. And Jesus, recognizing this gift, had entrusted him with a special

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office. Encouraged by this, what happy expectations must have been aroused in Judas' ambitious mind! Then came the day which John describes to us, when Jesus rejected the crown which was offered Him (vi. 15). To Judas the disappointment was a staggering one. The sons of Zebedee had reconciled themselves to the frustration of their hopes, but Judas could not do so. He never recovered from that blow. The offence that he had experienced then was incurable. Whereas many of His followers, deeply disappointed, forsook Jesus after that day, in the soul of Judas the former glowing enthusiasm was transformed into an equally passionate bitterness against Him who had cheated his fondest hopes.

In his bitterness he became small and mean. At least, from now onwards, he enriched himself by theft from the bag, thus taking revenge on the Master whom he had served, and from whom he had expected a so much greater reward (John's second hint, xii. 6). "Here is the point where it becomes clear that, from the most high-flown earthly hopes it is only a step to the vulgar search after money and possessions."

It is true that in Judas' betrayal of Jesus the lust for money may not have been the determining factor. Much more probably it was deadly hatred that gave birth to that infamous deed. His shameless, insolent behaviour at the Last Supper shows the blind rage of hate in this darkened spirit. Judas did not care that Jesus saw through him. Indeed, he wanted Him to know that he at least had not given in to His whims or forgiven Him for disappointing their hopes.

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Painfully the likeness of Jesus engraved itself on the hearts even of those most deeply in His confidence. Two of them were broken by it, one of them, according to Jesus, irrevocably (Matt. xxvi. 24). But when He at last became apparent to the eyes of the spirit, none of the others could have said, "Behold, He is flesh of my

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flesh and bone of my bone." Instead, He seemed to them a creation of God, in which the Highest had not made use of anything pertaining to the children of men.

But—and this is the conclusion reached in this chapter—here we have no peculiar little garden in which the wonderful figure of Jesus attained its natural growth under the care of human hands.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS IN CONTRADICTION TO OUR IDEAS

"Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." MATTHEW XI. 6

"How easy it is to be led astray by Jesus!" HEUBNER

NEITHER Judaism nor paganism, nor yet the little circle of His disciples has proved itself at all conclusively to be the soil in which the figure of Jesus was nurtured. On the contrary, the world in which He lived has turned out to have been in every way unsuited to bring forth this divine form, even as a figment of the imagination. In the important, determining characteristics, Jesus was a stranger to His age. Is it any wonder? Are we not all in conflict with Him? What if He should always be at variance with the thoughts and ideas of men so long as these shall exist? This is the position which we must now consider: Jesus is still, to-day, at variance with the thought of all mankind; because the *natural* man, in so far as he is stained by sin, sees in Him an enemy.

The opposition of our own day has more significance than anything we have so far noted. For we children of to-day are accustomed to the story of Jesus, and have been brought up in His way of thought. Christianity has become the common religion, and, having been altered in many ways, it fits us in a thousand respects like a comfortable old coat which we now take for granted. And yet, does not the Founder of Christianity still conflict with our ideas? How strange and alien He is to us! In comparison with the manner of earthly men, His ways seem to have been brought from the far-away distance of heaven.

Jesus in opposition to the thoughts of His Christians! Let us speak first of the *conscious* hostility.

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There are illustrious names among those who have been offended in the foolish Son of man, aggravated by His lowly, humble ways to bitter enmity. In a letter from Frederick the Great to Voltaire, we see how sharply opposed the emperor was to the Nazarene, or, as he believed, to those who had invented Him. "If twelve ragamuffins were able to found a religion which exhibits the greatest foolishness, surely it should be easy enough to rid the world of this absurdity." Goethe, in one of his Venetian epigrams, shows no less fundamental a distaste for the ways of Jesus, opposed as they are to human ideals.¹

Vieles kann ich ertragen. Die meisten beschwerlichen Dinge
Duld' ich mit ruhigem Mut, wie es ein Gott mir gebet.
Wenige sind mir jedoch, wie Gift und Schlange zuwider;
Viere: Rauch des Tabaks, Wanzen und Knoblauch und
Kreuz.²

Less harshly, but still in the same line of thought, a man of letters of our own day has said, "I cannot stand the insipid story of the sufferings of Christ."

Meanwhile, not only single individuals but groups of people have set themselves up to-day in direct and conscious antagonism to the eulogized likeness of Jesus. He pleases neither the strong nor the weak. Both of these classes have evolved a moral code, and both have broken entirely, and in furious hatred, with the code of Christ. Let us consider first the code of the strong.

The more attractive name given to it is the code of the superman, and their leader is Friedrich Nietzsche, the creator of the Anti-Christ. In conscious opposition to Christ, he has attempted a "revaluation of values." For him the cardinal virtues are power, splendour,

¹ Goethe admits that at that time in Italy he had imbued himself with a "really Julian-like hatred of Christianity."

² "I can bear much, suffering the most distasteful things sent by the gods with calm courage. But four things I hate like poison and serpents—the smoke of tobacco, lice, garlic, and the Cross."

dignity, all that is aesthetically beautiful and strong. It is possible to be "beyond virtue and vice" in the usual sense. What men call good and evil lies like a sea of mist below the feet of the great, the strong, the powerful, the splendid—a sea which they, standing on the mountaintops, have left far behind. Nietzsche's ideal is the "development of these great ones" to the "highest magnificence and might." From this point of view Christianity is to him the "rebellion of slaves in the history of morality." The "many" overcame the "great individuals." "The code of the weak, the cowardly, the lowly, the diseased, that is, the code of love-your-neighbour, of humility and pity, became victorious." Nietzsche calls Christianity "a religion of emasculation." "I beseech you, by my love and hope, do not cast away the hero in your soul." The resignation and submissive patience of Christian teaching seem to him false doctrine. The morality which enjoins pity, renunciation, righteousness, gentleness, brotherly love, seems to him crippling and enervating. The miserable, weak Christian code of pity and its ascetic ideals are to blame for the fact "that the highest and most magnificent type of man has never been evolved." Nietzsche dubs Christianity the "ethics of the herd," "the morality of slaves," "the system of governing without trouble and serving with joy." Here surely we see once more the natural man's inherent antagonism to Him who is in his view the foolish Son of man, an antagonism made powerful by hatred.

A chorus of disciples echoed Nietzsche's views, and he has become something approaching a fashionable philosopher. And, all unsuspected, a drop of the Nietzschean venom is to be found in more than one highly esteemed modern work. Think of Gerhart Hauptmann's *Sunken Bell*, a work which was immensely popular when it first appeared. In this the pastor speaks to Master Heinrich:

One thing I know which you no longer know,
The difference 'twixt right and wrong.

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Heinrich, however, as a Nietzschean superman, is proud of his ignorance, and replies :

And Adam knew it not in Paradise

Here we have again the lauded "beyond right and wrong." The man who has been so proud of himself sighs, as he lies dying :

The sun will come ! The night has been so long.

He means the night of prejudice, of small people's morality, of gloomily ascetic Christianity, and he hopes that at last the sun of an unhampered, exhilarated mankind will dawn.¹

But besides the code of the strong, we have the code of the weak, in similar open revolt against that figure more sacred than any other to the Christian. What is the ideal of those who have been treated unkindly by fate, those who are no supermen, who stand on the lower rungs of the ladder? They refuse to allow themselves to be satisfied with anything; they employ force when possible; they take their revenge when they can. The men of the herd as well as the supermen scorn the patience, the gentleness, the humility taught by Christianity. That saying of Jesus, which rings true as gold, "Blessed is he who suffers for righteousness' sake," affords them ground for laughter. And how bitterly the lowly Son of man Himself is repudiated, the patient Lamb of God, the silent Jesus who never answered back and never threatened when He suffered !

There is another way of expressing the antithesis between the code of the strong and that of the weak which, like Herod and Pilate, have combined against

¹ Waldemar Bonsel's widely read *Voyage to India* should also be remembered in this connection. More than once he makes merciless fun of evangelical missionaries, but, as a representative of liberated humanity, his real antagonism is quite obviously against One much greater, whose servants these "simple-minded people" are.

the Nazarene. It is the antithesis between the individualist and the socialist, who unite in opposing Christ. In speaking of individualists, we are thinking particularly of the most pronounced of modern individualists, the Norwegian, Henrik Ibsen, who has drawn many a modern mind into his enchanted circle. In one of his earliest works, *Emperor and Galilean*, Ibsen has expressed the fundamental view, to which he has remained faithful—"The ancient beauty is no longer beautiful, and the new truth is no longer true." After the realm of truth (Christianity) and that of beauty (the ancient world) must come a third realm, in which both these are united. Ibsen was working for this third kingdom. "What is needed is the revolutionizing of the spirit of man." He wants a liberation of the so-called natural instincts. "I will be satisfied with my short span of life, if it serve to prepare for the temper of to-morrow." What this "third realm" will be like, he does not know. He has a cold, clear consciousness that his work will produce nothing but dissolution and destruction. That is both dreadful and mischievous. But what interests us is the depth of the antagonism to Christ combined with a Christian way of thinking. Rückert's words still hold good:

Weh', Mann Gottes dir, wenn du vorm Mann der Welt
Deine Himmelsweisheit willst entfalten.
Eh' er sich vor dir für einen Toren hält,
Wird er dich für einen Toren halten.¹

It has indeed been reserved for one of our contemporaries to give voice to the most unheard-of, monstrous sentiment of all in this respect. The head doctor of a provincial lunatic asylum has dared to give it as his opinion that, "from the point of view of a psychologist," Jesus was insane.

Yet, more important than anything we have yet

¹ Woe to you, man of God, if you attempt to teach heavenly wisdom to a man of the world. Rather than admit his folly, he will call you a fool.

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studied, seems to us the antagonism to Christ in the circles where people pride themselves on being in the Christian succession. They hold themselves to be good Christians and imitators of their Master, and yet they form for themselves ideals which, if clearly discerned, would never pass muster before Christ. And these ideals are not merely the mistaken idea of individual Christians; no, they are pretty nearly the common property of Christian people. They are the innocent reflection of the natural heart which is still at variance with Christ, and, even on Christian ground, has not yet experienced radical regeneration. Our attitude towards the world, which is usually taken to be Christian enough, borrows more than many realize from this antagonism to Christ.

To take one or two points only, how, for instance, do Christian people regard worldly honour? Even a Krummacher sings of this, "Honour is sweet if our heart tells us that our head deserves the crown." This reminds us of Aristotle, and our own feelings are well expressed by Shakespeare when he says:

Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.

The same poet, a great judge of human nature, has another passage, also, alas, applicable to the Christian:

Honour's thought
Reigns solely in the breast of every man.

He does not wish to show up this striving as a weakness, but as the justifiable ideal of strong, sane natures. How differently Jesus reasoned!¹

¹ The Christian may not seek honour and fame, but that does not mean that he may not enjoy the recognition which God allows his work to find in the world. He may be all the more satisfied with such recognition as affording solid ground for further work.

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In close connection with the Christian's estimate of worldly honour stands his valuation of humility. Prince Bismarck's words in the exciting days following his dismissal aroused widespread sympathy: "I cannot agree to such a thing," he declared, and then, "I lack the necessary Christian humility" (loud laughter). The natural feeling in this respect is upheld by even so earnest a judge of Christianity as Hilty (*Gluck*), "The textbook of Epictetus," he says, "deserves to be more widely read in schools, for Stoicism has a great attraction for the adolescent, ambitious mind among educated people, while Christianity presupposes a humility which cannot be native to the student." Beyschlag agrees with this opinion when he writes in his reminiscences of a master of the High School at Frankfort, "His ideal was certainly humanistic; but he had an ideal, and one which we could understand and make use of. (The nobly beautiful, *καλὸς ἀγαθόν*.) We do not exactly desire to see humility put on the same footing as purity of heart, but we look for a finer bond in the union between greatness and virtue." Think of Schiller's distich in this connection:

Nur zwei Tugenden gibt's. O wären sie immer vereinigt,
Immer die Güte auch gross, immer die Grösse auch gut!¹

Does it not seem as though we were trying to merge the pagan sentiment, "always to be the first, and to outstrive the rest," and the Christian purity of heart into a single product? We are all of us at variance with Jesus, busying Himself with little, lowly things, and are like the Bible commentator of the present century who cannot discover any justification for Jesus' conduct in the episode of the foot-washing, declaring that he can find no edification in such a proof of humility.

When speaking of humility, we remember, too, the lowly company which Jesus kept, and the opposition

¹ There are but two virtues. Oh that they were always combined—that goodness always were great, and greatness good!

DIRECT PROOF OF THE OFFENCE

among Christian people has not remained silent on this point. Even now we look with suspicion on His intercourse with the depressed classes, His intimacy with the out-cast. "A man is known by his friends" is a proverb which experience has shown us to be reliable. We consider it our moral duty to order our intercourse so that it reacts on our minds in such a way as to ennoble and enrich them. "Let us always desire what is good, and cleave to the noblest." Schiller too writes :

Hast du etwas, so teile mir's mit, und ich zahle was recht ist.
Bist du etwas, O dann tauschen die Seelen wir aus.¹

In the matter of giving and receiving, too, the noble-minded man of to-day is apt to be more sensitive and backward than Jesus. In his book *Ingo*, Gustav Freytag gives a description of the Thuringians in Waldlauben which conveys the modern view. "Everyone believed that the master was honoured in giving, but the servant was honoured in receiving the gift." Kant states it as a principle, "Do not accept benefits which you can do without." "Undeserved poverty makes a man proud," says Goethe, in *Hermann und Dorothea*. And Tellheim, in the same spirit of pride, says to Werner, "It is not meet that I should be your debtor." But Riccaut seems to be despised for his broadmindedness in this matter of accepting gifts :

FRÄULEIN : Think you he would take it ill if I were to offer him something?

FRANCISCA : He does not seem to me that sort of man.

Human wisdom still believes that "Quick to bestow, slow to ask, these are the customs of nobility."

But let us leave the question of humility and turn to examine the feeling of our own day with regard to

¹ "If you own something, share it with me, and I will pay what is fair. If you are something, let our souls have sweet commune together."

patience and gentleness. Let us first hear what Goethe has to say :

Was bringt in Schulden?
Harren und dulden!
Was macht gewinnen?
Nicht lange besinnen!
Was bringt zu Ehren?
Sich wehren!¹

There is strangely enough a curious consistency of opinion in people's conception of man and his rebellious attitude to these two virtues. In *Soll und Haben* Bernard Ehrental, lying mortally ill, whispers, "I will try to prove that the perfect man repays with interest every blow dealt him by fate." In *King Mark*, the master's pious daughter echoes the same sentiment: "Were I a man, I too had chastised the bailiff."² Shakespeare's Macbeth asks:

Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature
That you can let this go? Are you so gosselled
To pray for this good man, and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bowed you to the grave
And beggared yours for ever?

And the answer comes:

We are men, my liege.

In *Hypatia*, it is said of Philemon in the ship of the Goths: "But the monk was a man, and a young man at that, who had no intention of dying unrevenged and without a struggle." And the Iron Chancellor, who is considered, in many ways rightly, to be the pattern of true manhood in our own time, published the following

- ¹ What brings us to grief? Suffering and endurance!
What helps us to win through? Not patient deliberation!
What bring us to honour? Maintaining our own rights!

² The bailiff had beaten an old man at his work, and had been chastised by King Mark with his own whip.

words in one of his articles in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*: "The prince is accustomed from his youth onwards to return blow for blow; he is, so to speak, always in the attitude of a duellist, and may well hold that deeds speak more loudly than words." So little advance have gentleness and patience made in our modern thought! Hebbel's frank words are taken straight from life: "The reader is probably thinking to himself, Soon the Frenchman will beat down the hussar, and he is already looking forward to the scene." These are the actual words, already looking forward to it!¹ Goethe is right when he says, "It pleases us and flatters our vanity to see a hero acting independently, loving and hating as his heart bids him, undertaking a task and carrying it through; overcoming all hindrances in the way, he reaches the goal he has set before him." But patience and gentleness would lie like boulders in the hero's path, and would not fit in with the ideal we cherish in our hearts. "Let not those that trample on your rights go unpunished" (Kant).

And now we come to loving one's enemy. We are not here concerned only with the period of the early dawn of Christianity. Gustav Freytag writing of that period in *Ingraben*, makes Bernhard's son, Bruno, say: "Their teaching about love shows us that the Christians take their stand on Scriptures which have been given them by a God. For it is more possible to command a God to do something inhuman than a man." Ebers describes the same period in his book *Homo Sum*, where Stephen says, "It is almost inhuman to forgive an enemy."²

¹ In *Emilia Galotti* our feelings are almost affronted to think that the Prince should escape without punishment. And the poet has to make excuse for this part of his play by saying, "This life is all that the vicious have." He excuses it, too, by praising the fatherly act done for Emilia: "What an' she be not worthy of what I do for her."

² In this connection we might mention, too, Sudermann's *Johannes*. "JOHANNES: And what does he teach? FIRST GALILEAN: Yes, what does he teach? a pack of foolishness . . . for instance, that we ought to love our enemies." In *Quo Vadis?*, when Chilon the Greek is forgiven

But what we want to bring out is the modern attitude, which is apparent as soon as the subject is broached. "Man's consolation is revenge." At one time, when a knight received his promotion, he was given a blow with a sword, to remind him that this would be the last rebuke he would have to suffer in patience. How strongly this conviction is rooted to-day in the hearts of not the worst among us! It is used as a wall of defence to protect the certainly un-Christian habit of duelling. And even if we sometimes forgive our enemy, we do so for very inadequate reasons. "Who wastes his rage on men of no account is like a buzzard hunting after mice" (*King Mark*). Or, as Hebbel says, "The man who is not worthy of my love, is unworthy of my hatred."

Nor do the people of our day understand Jesus' service of others. It is true that one of our great men has given us the saying, "The prince is the servant of the State." But does this add a royal touch to Jesus' service of others? This well-known saying only means that the prince's domination should be for the good of his country. But the "great one" is still high above the common people, forcing his fellow-men beneath his feet. It is enough for them that what is done is for their good.

We have said enough, perhaps, about men's dealings with each other. Let us now look at the attitude of the hero or the great man towards the world which presses in upon him with its bitterness and its sweetness. Does Jesus escape the opposition of our thoughts here?

The mastery of nature is for us a necessary characteristic in the ideal portrait of the hero. "Even when he was really weary," writes Stuhlmann of Emin Pasha, "he never allowed it to be noticed." "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well."

by his most deadly enemy, he asks in astonishment, "Why did they not kill me?" And although he had discussed the Christian teaching with Euricius, in spite of his conversation with Ursinus on the banks of the river, and in spite of all he had learned in Ostranum, he could find no answer to this question.

"It is the privilege of the great to conceal their tears."

"Jesus wept."

"There are natures which are great through what they achieve, and others through what they disdain" (Grimm). How far removed Jesus was from either of these when He lived on our earth!

Do the views of the people of the present day on man's courage in adversity differ from those of the ancient world? To the reflective mind, does it seem as though Jesus were no longer in opposition to man's ideals?¹ Let us give a selection of quotations from our thinkers and writers as an answer to this question—quotations which could easily be multiplied:

Andreas Hofer faced his fate,
His mien was like that of a king,
His brow was calm, serene his gait,
To him death was a little thing. (Mosen.)

"This is the time to prove by deeds that the dignity of man does not yield pride of place to the majesty of the gods. . . . Let us decide with cheerfulness on this step, even tho' it be attended with the risk of death" (*Faust*).

"What is mightier than death? He who can laugh when it threatens" (Ruckert).

"If anything is mightier than fate, it must be the courage that meets it unafraid."

"Only Zriny shed no tears, but had a kindly smile and a comforting word for everyone. I tell you, boys, I have seen him fighting like a lion. But after that scene of farewell, I know what a hero looks like" (Caspari).

And a proverb puts the seal on it all: "Miserable is the man who longs for death; but still more miserable he who fears it."

¹ But our opposition here has another basis than the sinful error of our natural emotions; it is to a certain extent justified and Jesus' curious attitude needs to be explained (cf. Chapter III in Part Three, under *Death*).

But how does Gethsemane, with its fears and trembling, stand comparison with these ideals?

In another part of this book (pp. 54-56)¹ we have already compared the pagan ideal of a death scene with the Passion of Christ. Let us quote here the ideal picture of the last hours of a human being, as it is given to us by a Christian poet in his *Mary Stuart*.

"Melville, you are in error if you think the Queen stands in need of our support in her hour of death. It is she who gives to us a noble example of self-control."

"No sign of pale fear, no word of complaint dishonoured my Queen."

"Now she takes a moment of rest. The last sleep refreshes her."²

Then, before the execution:

"Why do you weep thus and lament? You should rejoice with me. You are come to witness the triumph of your Queen, not her death."

One might say that every characteristic of Socrates is reflected here, but what a sharp contrast to Christ! Men's ideals have not changed; and Jesus is still in opposition to our ideas.

Yet such human thought is supposed to have crowned this Man with the diadem of majesty?

On the contrary, it is we who have to get accustomed to Him; even after nineteen hundred years our minds and hearts seem unable to grasp Him in His entirety. "Behold, what manner of Man!" . . . "I am from above!"

¹ See also Appendix, p. 461.

² Cf. too a conversation in Bismarck's *Reminiscences* with Frederick William IV in 1848, "A king must be able to sleep, I said to him." Further, from an interview between Hindenburg and a journalist (1916), "Can the leader of an army sleep when great decisions are about to be taken?" "Why not? Perhaps one does not sleep so soundly if everything is not going as it should. But if things are going well, of course one sleeps."

PART TWO

STUMBLING-BLOCK CHARACTERISTICS
IN JESUS: THE VARIOUS REACTIONS

CHAPTER I

IN THE REACTIONS OF HISTORY

"Christ is the paradox which history can never assimilate."

S. KIRKEGARD

THERE is, besides positive proof, still another way in which the foolishness in the likeness of Jesus can be brought out: we can show the reaction against it in history. At no time has Christianity quietly accepted this likeness; on the contrary, it has always worked at it and remodelled it, sometimes within limits, and sometimes so passionately that it has been refashioned out of all recognition. Can there be any stronger proof of the apparent foolishness of this likeness than the fact of such distortion throughout the centuries?

One thing was of course natural in this refashioning: every generation in approaching the figure of Jesus afresh has tried to rectify the likeness where they felt it to be deficient. Naturally, too, the refashioning was undertaken most zealously when the first contact was made with Christ. Afterwards, under the force of habit, a gradual adjustment, a certain reconciliation took place.

In the course of history there have been three great peoples and civilizations which, in coming into contact with Christ, have had a transforming influence on the likeness. The first was the culture of Greece, with all its splendour, which tended more and more to take on the warm colouring of the Orient. About the same time, as well as later, the Roman Empire, with its lust for domination, had to come to terms with Him. Later still, the picture of Jesus was passed on to a third race of people, for meanwhile a new epoch had dawned in the history of the world, and Germanism in all its power had taken the stage. Each time that the spirit of a different race

made its entry into the history of the evangel it manipulated the figure of Him who is the Lord and Master of that history, sometimes to such an extent that it was deformed and defaced.¹

But after a long period there came a time when people desired to confine themselves, consciously, to the words of Scripture as being the only standard, and to take the likeness as it was given in the Gospels. And what was the result? Did the likeness of Jesus, with its foolishness and its offence, become, in Protestantism, the assured possession of all Christians? The unexpected happened. The reaction so often experienced again took place, this time in the corrections, rejections, and reckless exegesis of the Bible commentators.

The foolishness of Jesus was still unacceptable.²

¹ We shall discuss Romanism last of all simply because its spirit still continues in the present day in Roman Catholicism.

² We do not intend to speak further of this last reaction of a Protestantism nurtured in the lap of the Scriptures. To make the matter clear, therefore, we shall make the following remarks now.

First of all let us take some of the extraordinary allegations made by the exegetes. Heubner assures us that "it is quite incorrect to suppose that the disciples' vigil with our Lord was meant to comfort and strengthen Him: they were to watch in order that they might observe Him." Not a few of the commentators make the angel who, according to Luke, appeared in Gethsemane to strengthen Jesus, into an evil spirit. Satan appeared to Christ in the most terrible form and wrestled with Him. Godet and Hoffmann will only admit that Jesus received "strengthening of the body," and think that the Son of God felt "physically unwell." Many have objected to the idea that in the cry from the Cross, "I thirst," Jesus should have spared any thought on a purely physical sensation of pain. So they have turned it into a "spiritual thirst for the fulfilment of His work." Steinmayer takes a popular view when he explains that "even the most ordinary experience teaches us that it is much easier to pour coals of fire on the head of opponents than to make a request of them or receive a benefit from them. . . ." Jesus did the latter, and John is supposed to relate the fact in astonishment and admiration.

Still one more example from the great number of text alterations and rejections undertaken by the exegetes. The fear apparent in Gethsemane was so opposed to the ideal of Christ held by Schleier-

[Note continued on page 91]

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macher and seemed to him so contrary to the words of farewell in John's Gospel, that he simply raised doubts as to the authenticity of the account given. Not a few of his predecessors were even more determined. Some of the transcribers of the Bible boldly omitted the story of the angel who strengthened Jesus, as well as that of His bloody sweat. Then who could say that so strange a tale about the Son of God had ever been in the New Testament at all?

CHAPTER II

JESUS ACCORDING TO THE APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS, OR THE REACTION IN GREECE AND THE ORIENT

"The Son of God should have been like the sun, lighting up everything it touches, but first revealing itself clearly."

CELSUS IN ORIGEN, LIB. II

It was not long before tradition began to make additions to the figure of Jesus—certainly before the end of the first century. After the death of the eye-witnesses of Jesus' life, the restraint imposed by them was removed and a strong reaction set in against the likeness given by the Gospels. Christianity was living in an age of enthusiasm, filled with the consciousness of the possession of the Holy Ghost. In this state of exaltation Christians began to dare to think of transmitting the story, for, so they persuaded themselves, the Spirit gave new revelations about the past as well as about the present. Any Christian enlightened by the Spirit could credibly enrich the story of the past. And now there arose the strongest reaction against the offence in the portrait of Christ that has ever been experienced within Christianity. A torrent of original ideas broke like the deluge over the figure of Jesus—ideas generated from Greek civilization, not untouched by Oriental and Jewish influences. It was only due to the over-ruling power of God that the Four Gospels, like the ark of Noah, carried the picture of Christ unharmed through the raging flood.

The retrograde literature of which we are speaking is often lacking in taste; but it definitely set out to supply something which seems to be lacking in the figure of Jesus, and which certainly seemed to the world of that time to be absent from the picture. For the ancient world with its love of pomp and glitter missed in Jesus the

splendour of a god. The Apocryphal Gospels believed they were doing a real service in supplying this absent splendour.

There was a great deal of this literature, much of which has come down to us in name only. But the impression it makes is indelible; as air will rush violently into a vacuum, so, in those days, imagination and invention poured from all sides into the "foolish" life of Jesus, with one object in view, namely, to invest His life with the god-like magnificence and splendour which it seemed to lack.

All the great literature with which we are now concerned has something in common even in its outward form: it is concerned exclusively with the story of our Lord's childhood and with the last tragic hours of His death. What is the explanation of this? It is very obvious in the story of the Passion. If much in the life of Jesus is an offence to the natural man, His Passion is particularly so. Here the stumbling-blocks are piled high, and here, therefore, many adjustments had to be made. But why should this Apocryphal literature be so taken up with the childhood of Jesus? No one can say that this story was in any particular need of additional embellishment. In this part of His life—and not only in the Christmas story—there is manifest more than elsewhere a certain glory. But this childhood was like a piece of open ground lying ready for the builder. There was no danger here of coming into conflict with what was already known and had been handed down, and so a history of Jesus could be built up, rich in those qualities which the human heart otherwise so sadly missed in the story.

There was still another place lying free for the imaginative builder—the three days between the crucifixion and the resurrection. And this ground, too, was unstintedly used in order that the Son of God might be richly adorned with glory. The descent into Sheol was turned into a triumphal procession. The time between His twelfth year and His first public appearance, a period in the life of

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Jesus to which one would naturally have turned first when attempting to gild and decorate the story, resisted all additions because of John's note in the second chapter of his Gospel: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus." *In the days of the Baptist, too, Jesus was obviously unknown when He appeared among the people, and thus it was impossible to fill the period immediately preceding this with the splendour of a Son of God.*

But let us now study more closely this portrait itself which evidences such a strong reversion from the likeness in the Gospels.

* * * * *

Was it not an offence that Jesus should have been born in a stable or even, as was written, in a dark cavern; and that when He came down to earth only a few shepherds were aware of the fact? Was that really in keeping with the dignity of the Son of God? And so a golden shimmer of glory had to be poured over that lowly state until it was brought into the right perspective. Observe then what took place.

"When Mary entered the cavern," say the Apocryphal Gospels, "the whole place began to glow as though the sun itself were shedding its radiance there; and the divine light illuminated the cavern as though it were the sixth hour of the day, continuing to do so by night and by day so long as Mary remained there." We are told of Joseph in this hour that "when he looked at the heavens he beheld the North star stand still, and the birds of heaven tremble; he looked on the earth and beheld a dish, and labourers standing beside it; their hands were in the dish, and they lifted them not to their mouths, for their faces were turned upward. And he beheld sheep being driven, and the sheep stood still; the shepherd raised his hand to strike them, but his hand remained uplifted. And he beheld and saw the stream with goats standing therein; their mouths were over the water, but they drank not, and were as dumb." It was the

hour of Jesus' birth, and for a moment all the activity of Nature was stilled. The whole earth must have been moved by so extraordinary an event, must have borne witness that something extraordinary was taking place.

Let us take another point. Was it not shameful that, even while still a child, Jesus should have been driven to flight? That He often had to go into hiding during His lifetime? Could this flight not be changed into a triumphal journey? That must have been it, of course! Nothing else would have been fitting for the Son of God. Listen! The parents of Jesus are fleeing with the Child. Robbers have just fallen upon a number of travellers and plundered them. The Holy Family, all unknowing, approaches the hiding-place of the robber-band. "But the robbers heard a great tumult as of the approach of a king leaving his city with a great army of men and horses and blowing of trumpets; then they were afraid, and deserting their plunder they fled."

If Christ were the Lord of creation, must not Nature have bowed before Him? Even the wild beasts did reverence. On the flight to Egypt the parents of Jesus come with Him into a cave full of dragons. "Then Jesus stepped from His mother's knee and on His own feet stood before the dragons. But they worshipped Him, and when they had worshipped, they left the cave. . . . In the same manner lions and panthers worshipped Him and accompanied them into the desert." On another occasion, when Jesus is eight years old, He goes from Jericho to the Jordan. "And there was a cave in which was a lioness and her cubs. And Jesus sat in the cave, and the lion cubs frolicked between His feet, caressing Him and playing with Him. The older lions stood afar off, with bent heads, lashing their tails and worshipping Him."

Think of another stumbling-block in the Gospel story. Could Jesus ever have been hungry or thirsty? He, the Creator of all things? It could not have been so. He knew how to aid Himself, even in the wilderness. "Then

the Child Jesus, sitting in His mother's lap, spoke with a joyful countenance to the palm tree: 'Tree, bow down thy branches [they are too high to reach] and refresh My mother with thy fruit . . . open a vein in thy roots, and let water flow for our refreshment.'"

Was it possible that a God, descending from heaven, should find no faith on the earth?¹ And should it be said of Jesus that He was not able to convince His brothers or His relations of His majesty? Further, when He grew up in Nazareth, it was as a simple carpenter's apprentice, the assistant of His father, whom He obeyed as every child obeys its parents. The Apocryphal writers knew better! What a different position He occupied in reality! "When His family were assembled, Jesus blessed them and, taking precedence, began to eat and to drink. For none of them dared to eat or to drink or to set themselves at table until He, first blessing them, had done so. And once, when He was absent, they waited till He should come. And when He would not eat, neither did Joseph nor Mary nor His brethren. For His brethren, who kept His life as a light before their eyes, beheld what He did, and feared Him. And when Jesus slept, by day or by night, the radiance of God shone round Him." (That is, a beam of light, filling everyone with reverence and awe.)

Could Jesus have required a teacher? Could He ever have learned from a man? On the contrary, evil befell those who took it upon themselves to instruct Him. "Alas, friend, teach thou me! I cannot follow His mind," cried one pitiable man. "I have deceived myself, thrice cursed that I am. I believed myself to have a pupil, and found that I had a teacher."

As to His miracles, was it credible that they should have been so monotonous? Was it possible that the men of the Old Testament should have surpassed Jesus in this respect? Had He really so seldom raised people from the dead? The Apocryphal Gospels tell of many

¹ One of Celsus' questions (cf. further later on).

other cases. How perversely they exaggerate His miracles of healing! What an elaborate conglomeration of wonders they attribute to Him! "Jesus therefore brought forth a spring of water in Matarea [in Egypt] in which Mary washed His garment. And from the sweat which came from Jesus' body there came forth balm in that neighbourhood." The water Jesus washes in, even His napkins, heal people suffering from dangerous diseases. A boy who makes a garment out of Jesus' swaddling clothes is preserved from heat in a hot oven while clad in this garment, and later, when he had been cruelly thrown into a well, he remains floating on the top until he is rescued. On the journey to Egypt Joseph speaks to his Child, saying, "Lord! we are fainting with heat; if it seem good to Thee, let us take the way by the sea." And at once Jesus shortens the thirty days' journey to one brief day. On another occasion neighbours complain to Joseph, "Behold, thy Son is by the stream and hath made sparrows out of clay, profaning the Sabbath." But Jesus claps His hands and calls to the sparrows, "Away with you!" And they all fly away, chirruping. Have we not here all the glory of a creative God?

But it is impossible to describe fully all the splendid miracles of this period. To-day Jesus turns a mule into a man, to-morrow mocking boys into goats; and again, a snake having poisoned a man by its bite, He summons it from its hole, makes it suck the venom from the wound, and then curses it until it bursts asunder. The cynosure of all eyes, He crosses the Jordan followed by a procession of lions, "and the waters of Jordan were divided, on the left hand and on the right." He puts a dried fish into water and behold, it swims! He carries water in His robe without spilling it. While He is at work with His father, planks which Joseph cannot fashion aright are shortened or lengthened as required by a single word of His mouth. Was anything impossible to Him? Who ever performed more amazing deeds?

It is of no little importance to note that the writers

understood how to repress completely that patience which offended them, His foolishly quiet acceptance of things, His objectionable gentleness. Here is one example: "The son of Annas the wise man stood also beside Him, and with a rod he spilled the water which Jesus had collected [in playing]. When Jesus beheld it, He was grieved and spake . . . "Behold, thou also shalt dry up and wither like a tree." And the boy withered up altogether. But when they all besought Jesus, He healed him, leaving, however, one of his limbs paralysed as a sign to them. Another time when Jesus is returning home with Joseph, He is met by a boy who, running past Him, pushes against Him so that He falls. Then Jesus speaks angrily to the boy, saying, "As thou has thrust against Me, so shalt thou be thrust down and not arise again." "And in the same hour the lad collapsed and died." This idea that no one affronted Christ or injured Him without being punished for it, the idea of retribution for sins against His person, runs all through the Apocryphal Gospels.¹ There was no intention of making Him into a revengeful man, they only sought to secure His glory by such methods.

It seemed incredible, too, that Jesus, the greatest of them all, should not have sought out the celebrated and prominent men of this world, and that the only occasion on which He confronted a prince He should have been brought before him by officers of the law. The writers of the Apocryphal Gospels have not a little to tell us of His meetings with princes and princesses suffering from leprosy, of visits to kings' palaces and intercourse with the great ones of the earth.

Thus they succeeded in creating within the frame of the story of the Lord's childhood nothing less than a completely new character-portrait of Jesus, this time one after men's hearts. There was nothing lacking here of

¹ Even a teacher who chastised Him was thrown to the ground. On another occasion we read, "those who accused Him were immediately smitten with blindness."

all His contemporaries looked for: the glory, the radiance, and the majesty of a God.

* * * * *

As we have already noted, these early writers attempted, too, to shed a halo over the darkest passage in the story of Jesus. A glorious light was to irradiate even the dark night of suffering. Let us follow some of these attempts.

"He was taken prisoner in the most ignominious manner," scoffs one of the first of the learned opponents of Christianity. He means that Jesus was treated as though He had been a murderer. But the Apocryphal Gospels knew how to obliterate this ignominy. "Pilate called to his runner,¹ saying, 'Let Jesus be led forth with decorum.' The runner therefore went out, and when He recognized Him, he bowed himself before Jesus and taking the robe in his hand, spread it out on the ground before Him and said, 'Lord, tread Thou on it, and come in, the prince awaits Thee. . . .' When Jesus therefore entered, the standard-bearers bore their standards, and the figures on the standards bowed themselves and did reverence before Him." This is repeated, even when the Jews lodge a complaint, and six strong men chosen by them hold the standards. What splendour gleams here through all the lowliness!

But there was something that was even more of an offence than mere lowliness. Jesus was said to have been fearful and to have lamented. Here, too, the Apocryphal story smooths away the stumbling-block. "Satan spake unto Hades [the ruler of the kingdom of death], saying, 'O Devourer of men, O Insatiable One, listen to my words. With our aid the Jews have crucified one of their own people, named Jesus, who calls Himself the Son of God though He is but a man. Now that He is dead, prepare for us to bring Him here into safety. For I know that He is a man, and I have heard Him say,

¹ Note, not to his servant. This showed that the prisoner was a man of mark.

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"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." 'Then spake Hades . . . 'If you say that you have heard that He fears death, He is but scoffing and mocking at you, so that He may at last seize you with a firm hand.' " In this way the words that are not thought fitting for a Son of God are turned into a method of outwitting Satan. In the Gospel of Peter we read : "They crucified the Lord in the midst, but He held His peace, as though He felt no pain." Is not Jesus thus really "like a god who, from on high, disdains mankind and laughs at what they do unto Him"? (Celsus' challenge).

But the greatest offence of all was that in His suffering He was apparently deserted by His Father. This offence, too, is boldly swept aside. "The Lord cried with a loud voice and said, 'My strength, My strength, why hast thou forsaken Me?' " (Alteration of Matt. xxvii. 46).

* * * * *

Even after His victorious cry of "It is finished," Jesus was not altogether without offence. After His suffering was past, did He really reveal Himself only "secretly" "to a woman and to His disciples," and not in awful majesty to His enemies? To smooth away this offence, the tumultuous, triumphal procession of the Conqueror was translated into the underworld, and from there radiates glory over the Author of our salvation. "While Satan and Hades were thus speaking together, there arose a mighty voice as of thunder and spake, saying, 'Fling wide the gates, O ye princes; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors; the King of glory shall come in.' . . . And again there came a voice, saying, 'Fling wide the gates!' When Hades heard the voice for the second time, he made as though he understood not, and answered, saying, 'Who is this King of glory?' Then spake the angels of the Lord, 'It is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.' Hardly was this word uttered when the gates of brass crashed to earth, the iron bolts were shattered, and the shackles fell from those that were

bound. Then the King of glory entered in, in the figure of a Man, and all the darkness of the underworld was illumined."

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The questions with which we have preceded each of the testimonies of the Apocryphal Gospels, calling forth their witness, did not originate in our mind. Formulated perhaps in another way, they were all propounded by the first learned opponent of Christianity, the pagan, Celsus, whose objections are already known to us (Origen, b. 185, wrote opposing his views,). "You have not even succeeded in clothing your opinions with the least vestige of probability," he taunted the Christians. Then he showed them what alterations should be made in the Gospel history if it were to make a credible and impressive story. He tells in detail how everything should have happened if Jesus had really been the Son of God. But Celsus was not the only one to feel this so strongly. Thousands before him had had almost similar ideas, and among them were the writers of the Apocryphal Gospels. They offer us everything of any importance which Celsus judged to be appropriate for a history of the Son of God.

But what a change has taken place in the opinions of the ages! Can there be any greater difference in this respect than between these people and ourselves? To-day the innumerable army of doubters says, "Jesus was exalted to be a God by His own people. Because they held Him to be the Son of God, He was obviously adorned by them with the glory of a God." But in those days even the ranks of the Christians judged otherwise. "No God would have lived His life like the Jesus of the Gospels. A foolish likeness!" Or, as Celsus' Jew, speaking for the non-Christians, put it, "He was the sort of man His words and deeds clearly show Him to be."

But where then is the brush which the hand of a painter must have wielded to satisfy the heart of man?

CHAPTER III

JESUS IN THE HELIAND, OR THE REACTION OF GERMANISM

"So Thou art indeed a King."

IN spite of the magnificence of the Roman Empire, all the refinement of its civilization, the beauty of its culture, and the extension of its power far into the countries of the barbarian, it was an already dying world into which Christianity made its entry in Hellas and Italy, on its first excursion. The feet of those who were to bury this epoch were already at the door. A young and ambitious nation, the ancient Germans, whose stormy beating at the gates of the Roman Empire had already alarmed the inhabitants of that ageing structure, were to become in future the makers of the world's history.

Christianity was one of the legacies of the old world to these strong and youthful nations, in fact the really great legacy which a dying world of civilization handed on to the newcomers. And thus, as the most sublime relic, the likeness of Christ was passed on by the countries of the Mediterranean to the newly born Germanic world. The clash between the new race and this ancient treasure engendered a curious state of affairs. Among the Germans until that time bards had sung of the heroic deeds of their pagan ancestors, often too of their contemporaries; and now wandering Christian minstrels travelled from place to place singing in the same way of the divine Hero who had overcome sin, death, and the devil. In the dawn of Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, and Nordic Christianity, now on the Thinghöhe, now in the halls of the mighty, now in the train of the Vikings, the travelling singers and minstrels sang and recited before the great ones of the people of a newly discovered, divine Hero.

REACTION OF GERMANISM

They sang in a kind of recitative chant to the accompaniment of the harp and the zither, and the staves of the verses (alliterative) were accompanied, as in olden times, by striking on a shield. One of the first of the Anglo-Saxon singers of this kind was Caedmon, who sang, among other things, of the vanquishing of hell by the mighty Christ. But all these bards were outstripped by the Singer of the Heliand. A few years after Karl, rough and ready, with sword in hand, had opened the newly won Saxon land to the Gospel, a Saxon from Munsterland, in Westphalia, sang and recited to the harshly converted people, after the manner of the travelling minstrels of the time, of the great Hero whom God had raised up in Bethlehem for all nations.

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Everyone knows how the Singer of the Heliand gave to his lofty subject the colouring of the old Germanic folklore. This transposing of the sacred history into a Germanic setting was certainly not carried out purposely, but the fact that he unconsciously turned it into a German story proves how deeply the bard had soaked himself in his material. The place of action has become German. The towns which Jesus visited, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and all the rest, become German strongholds surrounded by dense woods. The clouds in the sky are piled in masses as in the skies of Germany, and the stormy winds, sweeping them along, tear them to shreds. The people have become German too. We hear of Duke Pontius, of Bishop Caiaphas, of John, God's steward, of those doughty champions, the wise men. And the customs too are German. At Christmas, we are told, men were watching their horses; and the high-decked ships of North Germanic vikings sail on the Lake of Gennesareth. This all lends charm to the story and does no harm to the sacred theme. There is, in fact, a wonderfully beautiful blending of the Christian and the German. Intensely Germanic, the poem

is also intensely Christian, and entirely true to revealed truth. But this Germanization goes still further when it ventures on the figure of Christ. There would be no reason for protest even here if it were limited merely to outward details. Lucas Cranach did the same thing later on, when he clothed the people of the Gospel story and the Saviour Himself in the garb of his own time, giving to his pictures the local colour of his country. And are we not accustomed to-day to our painters working in the same fashion? We do not mind when they efface the Oriental characteristics in the face of the Saviour and when His garments are not drawn correctly from a strictly historical point of view. In a similar way, do we not all localize our conception of the Saviour, thus making Him more living and real to ourselves? But the Heliand goes further than this. In that ancient Saxon Gospel symphony, His features are so devised that His whole being is changed in a way we have now come to recognize, for it originates in the desire to remove the stumbling-blocks in the real likeness. It is this particular metamorphosis which interests us here.

What is the fundamental change carried out by the Heliand which falsifies the picture? Let us try to give the answer first by a parable. It is as though one had bought a box of bricks several sizes larger than it should be. Now each brick is of larger size than is right. That is what has been done with the figure of Christ in the Heliand. He appears as a king, a rich, powerful, mild German king—a national king. And though it is of no consequence whether Pilate is called a duke or a governor, Caiaphas a high priest or a bishop, this is of consequence. For Christ as a German and national king means nothing less than that His whole earthly course is raised to a higher level. In reality Jesus did not belong among the rich and the powerful of the earth, for He had not where to lay His head, and He was accounted as nothing but the carpenter's son. But why should the Singer of the Heliand, who has grasped so well the words and meaning

of Christ, have so grossly misdrawn Christ Himself? A tradition from the ninth century may perhaps give us the answer. It was an age—during the reign of Ludwig the Pious and after—to which any radical opposition or open derision of the Christian doctrine was entirely foreign. There is only one single instance of this known to us. The Abbot Hucbert, a brother of Queen Thietberga, mocked at the words from the Gospel, "Whoso humbleth himself shall be exalted." One might say that the Christ of the Gospels was unconsciously exalted by His German heralds, so that He should not be derided by their hearers as a man of no account. Here we see the natural reaction of the Germanic heart. In the German mind power and heroism ranked so high that they could not be dispensed with. The German sought the majesty of the prince in the godlike Hero whose follower he was invited to become.

It is right to stress the fact that, in the Heliand, Christ is always and above all the Teacher. But in the poem, even as a teacher He never discards the kingly mantle—even though His kingliness is only the outward expression of the thought that Christ is God. In the Heliand, exactly as in the apocalyptic Gospels, Christ is never divested of divinity. But this means nothing less than that here too the Son of God in the garb of the Gospels is rejected. For to this age also He was an offence.

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Vilmar gives it as his opinion that in the Heliand we have "the only truly Christian epos." And yet in this, too, there is a metamorphosis of the divine Hero. The people to whom the likeness of Jesus was here first presented were a simple people, who appreciated directness and plain-speaking. Yet even this homely folk of Lower Saxony found traits in the likeness which seemed to them too mean. They did not say as the Greeks had done, "Give Him more splendour, so that His like-

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ness as the Son of God may be rendered credible"; but the demand, "Give Him more majesty, so that we shall not be offended in Him," can be heard clearly enough in this otherwise precious legacy from a past age.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS ON ROMAN TERRITORY OR THE PAPACY

"The Kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign."

REVELATION XI. 15

CAN one speak at all of the likeness of Jesus on Roman territory? The Graeco-Oriental world produced in its abundant apocalyptic Gospels a picture of Jesus after its own heart—full of splendour; Germanism—not only in the Heliand—painted a powerful Christ such as it could understand; but did any such picture arise in this way in the Roman world?

The walls of Rome never sheltered a race of thinkers. Within that small space there was never much time devoted to thinking out matters of the spirit or the imagination. The people of Rome were always eminently practical. But for that very reason they soon turned the Christ into reality as they conceived it, bringing Him into accord with real life, for only by such an alteration could they hope for success.

Anyone who knows Rome can be in no doubt as to what her Christ would look like. Had not Christ rejected the thought of founding a kingdom? Well, Rome understood all about that subject, her knowledge of ruling could not be surpassed. The Romans knew how to make such a business serve its purpose much better than the Jesus of the Gospels. He never brought His kingdom to anything worth while—in the eyes of the Romans that was no wonder. But in order that the kingdom of Christ might be established, in order that it might be well governed and expanded, was it not necessary to have a successor to Him? If this question were answered in the affirmative, one could soon form out of this supposed

successor the Christ after one's own heart—the ruler of the world.

It is not our purpose to explain in detail how much Christianity in its development and the political forces of that time had to collaborate before the desire for unity under the leadership of Rome reached its head in the establishment of one man put in the place of Christ. A long way had to be travelled before this goal was reached. And the advance, naturally enough, was first made in fact before it was followed by the corresponding doctrine. While the Church was still the congregation of saints, there arose in Rome a congregation which held a preferential position. It was chiefly its situation in the capital of the world that placed this body at the head of the Christian congregations, as well as the security in which this great, wealthy and superficial, influential community was developed, the purity of its doctrine, and the fact that it was able to trace its foundation to Paul and Peter. Then came its transformation into a State Church, and its secularization into a kingdom at the time when a national Church was formed. "In consequence of the extraordinary development and the position of power to which the Catholic Church had attained in the reign of Philip the Arabian, Origen had already conceived the idea of the Catholic Church as the earthly kingdom of God, destined to include the Roman Empire, even humanity itself, and to unite and take the place of other empires." "But the imperial Church became a finished product when Diocletian undertook the great rebuilding of the Empire. From that time onwards it was no longer the possession of spiritual gifts that made a man a Christian, but obedience to the authority of the Church." "The Church's centre of gravity was suddenly found in organization; the community of saints had become a Church resting on the bishops, the successors of the apostles, the representatives of Christ or of God." And this picture of reigning bishops as Christ's representatives on earth,

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with their rights and duties of office, shows a reaction in the territory of the Roman world-empire against the likeness of Jesus in the Gospels.

But now there came a new step forward on the way to world-empire. As the bishops gained their place at the head of the congregations, as their self-glorified lords, the legal supremacy of the Roman bishops grew, after a long-fought-out struggle, out of the actual supremacy of the congregation in Rome. It was the world-dominating spirit of Rome herself that laid hold of her bishops. First by their ideas and then by the thunder of their edicts they strove to bring the world under their yoke. The nations had long been accustomed to receive their laws from Rome. It was still the seat of the ancient, mighty races. And now even the emperor's removal to Constantinople benefited the Roman bishops. The succession from Paul and Peter, who were believed to have held a leading position among the apostles, now became a matter of great importance for the bishop of Rome, as it had been at the beginning for the congregation there. As the result of this development, the successor of St. Peter, the vice-God, the representative of Christ on earth, was held to be in Rome, and the people could see in him a Christ after their own hearts—this time indeed a reaction against the offensive likeness of the Christ of the Gospels, which did not remain a mere figment of the imagination, but took a strong hold as an actual factor in the life of the Church, continuing to the present day.

After this explanation, do we still have to ask why the Jesus of the Gospels seemed foolish to the race which had grown up in the territory of the Roman Empire, and particularly in Rome itself, and in what way they sought to transform the likeness? It was authority they missed in the Nazarene, the authority and force of the ruler that the domineering city demanded. The way from within outwards was invisible to the eyes of these strenuous, force-loving people; according to the only

view which they could comprehend, the Kingdom of God must come from without and strike inwards. "All this will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me"—this thought from the story of the temptation, bearing so much the appearance of truth, had been victoriously planted here in the soil of the world-empire. The successor succumbed to the temptation which his Predecessor had so triumphantly dismissed when He said, "Get thee hence, Satan." In Rome there was the conviction that all religion must first bear the stamp of fixed law and order. Misled by this idea, the Catholic Church became and remains a tyrannical Church.

But let us keep more closely to our theme. How did this picture of Jesus in Roman territory eventually come to life in the pope? "He shall reign." In His successor Jesus was stamped as a regent. The lowliness and the service of others which were an offence had disappeared. He appears before us as a ruler. Up to the present day, this is the proclamation made to the pope on his coronation: "Know that thou art the father of princes and kings, the guide of the universe, the representative on earth of our Saviour Jesus Christ." According to the bull issued by Boniface VIII, obedience to the papal see is obligatory on all creatures who hope for salvation. The papacy stands alone in the fulness of its power; no constitutional body limits the Roman vice-God. He has the highest authority over the Church as well as over the world. Only for convenience' sake does he hand over the sword to earthly rulers. They act in his service and are under his command as servants under their Lord. He calls them sons, and treats them as children. In the Roman Church, obedience is a conception of immense scope. Domination on the one side and obedience on the other is the law prevailing on each step of the vast pyramid of the episcopal hierarchy. The bishops have to take an oath to the pope, the formula of which is very ancient, coming from an old oath of allegiance, and they stand by him as his vassals. His dominating power extends,

too, into the next world, his government is over heaven and hell, for the souls of the departed are still under his sway. In the days when the papacy stood at the height of its power, when a Gregory VII or an Innocent III wore the triple crown, it really looked to the unprejudiced eye as though the time had come when the triumphant song from Revelation might be raised: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign."

The position of ruler once won for Christ's successor in Roman territory, the appearance of domination had also to be kept up. Away with the poverty in the picture of Christ, away with the humility that was His! The possessions offered in the temptation, pleasure, honour, power—all so alluring to men—found acceptance here. What pomp was displayed, what brilliance was to be found in the Court of the cardinals! And in the midst of this glittering Court the man who had taken the place of Christ knew how to make himself of supreme importance. "He claims regal worship and adoration, men must kneel before him and kiss his foot." The pope's horse was led by emperors, and kings held the stirrup of Christ's viceroy. Now, indeed, the pope no longer demands that men should kiss his foot, but up to the present day even reigning monarchs kiss his hand, that being the fitting greeting. "In order to demonstrate clearly his unique sovereignty, the Romish high priest receives the visits of emperors and kings, but never returns them in person, only through the medium of his servant the cardinal secretary of State." Thus even in the smallest details of Romish ceremonial, care is taken that the position of the ruler should be made clearly apparent.

Naturally this successor of Christ is not lacking in the habits of the regent. Here the offence of service of others, so marked in the Jesus of the Gospels, was entirely overcome. The pope was to operate by domination. Canons of belief were issued which were to be accepted by the

faithful. Urged on by the pope, Theodosius made death the penalty for any deflection from belief in the Trinity. The punishment would be carried out even to-day if Rome could find an earthly weapon obedient enough to enforce the law. Force, which is inevitably employed by earthly rulers, was Rome's ideal also. How utterly they displaced the Sower, who patiently went about to sow His seed, trusting wholly in the word which would set up His Kingdom in the hearts of men, without compulsion of any kind! Other habits of an earthly potentate were associated with force in Christ's successor. Adaptability was a feature of his régime. He could bind and set free, he could be stern or mild as prudence suggested. The end consecrated the means, and worldly means were quite unscrupulously employed—trickery, deceit, bribery, yes, and worse. But the method was successful: power increased, the kingdom grew, and "force wrestled with forces."

At the entrance to the Samaritan village which denied the Lord shelter, the disciples besought Jesus, "Lord, let us call down fire from heaven to consume them as Elias did." It is clear that they desired to do this, but their Master forbade it. The Christ whom His successor in Rome represents has acquiesced; he hurls the thunder of his bans against the disobedient; he abolishes the oath of allegiance and releases the nations from obedience to their princes; those who are under his ban become outcasts among their fellow-men, and may be slain wherever they are found. He inflicts the chastisement of his interdict on whole countries so that their church bells are silenced, their dying left without comfort, and their dead without consecration. For the successor has broken entirely with the gentleness and patience of his Predecessor and has joined the ranks of the mighty in the earth, whose weapon is force. Does he no longer remember of whom he is supposed to be the spiritual offspring?

In speaking of the dominating habits of Christ's

successor, we might also call to mind the Crusades. Sylvester II (999) called for the aid of the Church as a whole on behalf of the Holy City which had been destroyed. Gregory VII (1074) fancied himself as the leader of an army which was to liberate the Christian Orient. The aim in view was not only the Holy Sepulchre, but Christian honour, the victory of Christ over Mohammed, the dominion of Europe over Asia. And all the time the pope was the moving spirit in these acts of violence. Even to-day Rome's missionary activities are often carried out in order to impress the nations, the Church pointing out that power—political power—stands behind its missions. Yes, indeed, force wrestles with forces.

Where is Jesus Himself to be found in Roman territory? Has He disappeared entirely behind His representative? They have succeeded in placing Him in such a position that He cannot clash with His impersonator. He has been relegated to the end of the process of development. He is enthroned as the Judge of the world. What a happily acquired harmony between the copy and the original picture! What majestic dignity the Judgement Day has! What a glorious apparition this Son of man presents, seated on His throne of splendour amidst the choir of His holy angels! But where in all this are we to find the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world? Where is the patient Christ, who still paces through the centuries, not with fire and sword, but bearing only the seed of the word?

Though it was not the last to make its appearance in history, we have treated this Romish distortion of the likeness of Jesus at the end of our section, because it became fully developed only during the course of centuries, and it is still active in our own day.

During this time the reaction has lost nothing of its attraction. Many an evangelical among our own people looks enviously towards Rome, and many a Protestant government sees something very imposing in the pope's

position, which does not fail to impress it. Let us admit that, to the natural eye, force does seem to mean power. Even those who have attained a wider vision admit to a singular gratification of the emotions in Roman territory. We need only quote Karl Hase's confession in this connection. "To the unprejudiced, the well-known blessing of the people on Green Thursday and on Easter Sunday has something impressive about it, even from a merely aesthetic point of view; and I cannot deny that, when our Lord blessed the children or the people after the Sermon on the Mount, it did not probably compare in radiance with this benediction, in its beautiful architectural setting." Verily in this picture of Christ's commissioner in Rome, the eyes of the world can observe but little foolishness.¹

¹ Even Nietzsche, who concludes his *Anti-Christ* with the words, "I call Christianity the one great curse. . . . I call it the undying blot of shame on humanity," even he cannot help feeling something like sympathy with the Roman Church. For in it he finds his ideal of the absolute ruler realized, and the contrast between master and slave carried out to his heart's content. But what a judgement on Rome Nietzsche's approval is! And, taken all in all, how faithfully Protestantism must have preserved the likeness of Christ when Nietzsche, jeering at the Germans, says: "They have Protestantism on their conscience, the foulest, most incurable, most irrefutable Christianity that there is. If we cannot do away with Christianity, the fault lies with the Germans." Thank God, we have kept our treasure essentially undefaced, it has been neither destroyed nor engulfed by the forces of the world.

PART THREE

THE RESULTS OF THE OFFENCE
APPARENT IN THE LIFE PICTURE

CHAPTER I

THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE ACCOUNT GIVEN

"He has really lived; no brush wielded by man could paint such a picture, no one could have invented it."

BECK

WHEN we connect it up together as best we can, to what conclusion has our exposition led us, heterogeneous as it has often been? We have seen that there is a determining, fundamental characteristic in the Biblical picture of Christ which puts it in opposition to the ideals of mankind. If our study thus far has led us to such a conclusion, it is now our intention to turn this conclusion to account. What is the result of the established fact of the offence in the picture of the life of Jesus?

The first and greatest consequence is this: His likeness was not taken from ideals which influenced heart and head, but from history and from reality; and it has been retained with such tenacious faithfulness that its formation has not been influenced in any way by popular ideals. If busy legend had been allowed the upper hand, the offence had long been erased, for the spirit of legend can be seen in the pictures of fancy. Does the likeness of the Nazarene correspond in any way with the spirit of man? No matter who drew the picture, we have seen that as soon as he began to follow his own idea, the likeness became distorted.

The evangelists themselves, as a matter of fact, very nearly followed the dictates of their own hearts and misdrew the picture. It was not only the ideals, the desires, and the hopes by which their hearts were stirred which urged them to draw falsely; they were impelled too, and with special power, by love, which would gladly have exalted the Beloved before the eyes of the whole

world. But this love, so richly in evidence, never made free use of the brush, never allowed itself to make alterations, even when it knew for a certainty that the likeness of the loved One would at first displease all the world—to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. Luke in his writings gives us two descriptions of death scenes, the death of the first martyr being a companion-piece to that of the Messiah. But, to human eyes, what a different ideal the death of Stephen presents! What a contrast between the lament of Jesus, "Now is My soul troubled," and that inner exaltation which made Stephen's face shine like that of an angel! Or compare in this connection Luke xxii. 44 with Acts vii. 55. Celsus mocked at this, and he was probably not the first to do so. But Origen answered him, not without scorn, "It had been easy to falsify such a matter, or even to have left it unreported." The warm love of the disciples would oppose it. "Rather, O Celsus, admit their truthfulness."

The same thing might be demonstrated in many other passages of the Gospel report. Truly this is a rarely strong and faithful recollection, unyielding even when opposed by the full force of love!

If we take this view, what is there to hinder us from confidently concluding further that, if the desires of the heart were here so strongly denied gratification, and the likeness of Him who is worthy of praise was preserved even when it was an offence, how much more—for it would have been much easier—must the same faithfulness have been employed in recording His words? For these were as though born to be graven in the memory, arresting and pointed in form, they would not easily be forgotten. And on the whole they would give much less offence than the moral characteristics in His likeness; their preservation would have cost the disciples less of a struggle.

But our estimation of the faithfulness of the report gains much from the very offence in this likeness, which is not only a continually effective and additional piece

of evidence for the faithfulness of the report as it was written at the time, but is also the pledge of this faithfulness, gained in advance. This assertion is based on quite ordinary psychological grounds. Do not the unusual and the unexpected make the deepest impression? Does not the idea that penetrates with most difficulty take the firmest hold? Nothing is more easily remembered than the extraordinary, the mind retaining longest anything that is contrary to all rules, and most glaringly in contrast to what we expect. If the accustomed resembles a wax impression on the memory, what we have described above resembles the stamp engraved on gold.

The Frenchman, Giraud, following the tracks of Livingstone through Africa, took particular pleasure in collecting from the native chiefs information about the great explorer. All who had met him were still full of his praises. "The Englishman," said one of them, "was a good man; he spoke much about the Mlungu (God) whom we black men do not know, and he said he had only one wife." This latter fact was obviously the thing that had made the greatest impression on the black polygamists, and therefore it was remembered better than anything else. How much in Jesus' likeness impressed itself on the disciples in the same way—because of its contrast to all they had expected!

Not only was the effect made by the Nazarene unexpected and undreamed of, but it had often wounded their hearts, inscribing itself on their minds with agonizing pain, as the inscription on a stone is indelibly engraved with the sharpest chisel. The painful contrast to all their hopes and expectations was unforgettable, and it reached its climax at Golgotha. Unforgettable, too, was what they had had to give up in their own natures under the discipline of this likeness. The pain which they had suffered in both cases made it certain that the experience would never be forgotten.

In still another connection there is a guarantee of the truth of the disciples' report in the offence which per-

meated the likeness of Jesus. The contrast between the way in which Jesus founded the Kingdom of God and the hopes for it cherished by the disciples, as well as the inward struggle in which this contrast involved them almost from the beginning, must have had a constantly sobering effect upon them, preserving them from all vague and fanatical enthusiasm. These disciples were not carried away, they did not feel themselves transported into a world of miracles; but instead, they had to submit to one disappointment after another. This, however, implied nothing less than a constant restraint laid on their hearts. With the clear-headedness of a man whose vision has been awakened by some rude shock, they saw what was taking place. All the time they were learning in a hard school, and this forcibly expelled any emotional fondness. And afterwards, when they came to paint the Master's likeness, He still sat before them and taught them.

Let us again sum up the convictions which have been forced upon us from various sides: We have here no romance in which the power of imagination has been allowed its head or the hand been guided by personal desires; rather we have a history dictated by reality—often distasteful enough—to obedient pupils, possessed by an insatiable desire to learn.

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There is still one matter which must be taken up at this point. We must warn against exaggeration. As one of our modern theologians has very rightly put it, "We cannot regard Jesus as having sat for His portrait."

Think of the magnificent carelessness our God has shown with regard to the handing down of the report which we have been studying. Take Christ's words to begin with. We do not, perhaps, possess a single passage of any length in its original wording. God solemnly renounced the preservation of His Son's speech in its actual wording, and no doubt He did so in the fulness

of His wisdom. For here, too, it is true that "the letter killeth," and so in His providence He ordained that the Aramaic words should be forgotten, and that the writing of the story should be undertaken not in the original but in the Greek language.¹ God manifested the same carefreeness with regard to the preservation of the life-story of His Son. For we have no documentary evidence such as the present-day mode of history-writing demands. The Gospels are written from quite another standpoint than that of a collection of documents. The evangelists meant to win people for Jesus by means of a practical declaration which should appeal to their hearts. What a drawback it is in the eyes of historical research that only two of the four evangelists were eye-witnesses! We have it on good authority that one of these confined himself essentially to recording the words of Jesus, while the other wrote in his old age, remote in time from the events themselves. Not nearly all that Jesus did has come down to us. The reports we have of His life show the most glaring omissions. How could they, in particular, have kept silence, except for one incident recorded of the twelve-year old Jesus, about a period of at least thirty years in a life which lasted for thirty-three years? Our deep concern is with those parts which are of dogmatic importance and which Paul set forth with such admirable clarity: "Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day."

¹ Remember in this connection the same magnificent carelessness shown by the first men who wrote down the story, even in the matter of reporting Christ's words. In one and the same book Luke gives three different reports of the Lord's words to the defeated Saul, tempted to this liberty by the Aramaic form of the passage (Acts ix. 5; xxii. 8; xxvi. 14, 15; cf. too John xviii. 9 with xvii. 12). Or think of the report of the words at the Last Supper. The Supper is celebrated at once (Acts ii. 46, cf. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 33—thus Christianity is one body, x. 16 f.). One might think that Jesus' words would have been preserved, literally, from the very beginning. And now, cf. Matt. xxvi. 26 ff.; Mark xiv. 22 f.; Luke xxii. 15 ff.; 1 Cor. xi. 23 ff. These men certainly did not keep to the mere letter.

THE RESULTS OF THE OFFENCE

But though it may be no portrait from life in the modern sense, we have in fact an assured and ample character-study of the Nazarene. Within these limits His likeness was sharply and deeply engraved in the mind and the memory of His followers.

In our day emphasis is laid on the fact that we only know the Jesus of the apostles, as He appears to us in their descriptions, sermons, commendations—in fact, only through the preaching of the apostles. Who can deny this? It is as indubitably true as the other fact, that the Lord Jesus did not choose to leave us His “Thoughts and Reminiscences.” But it is therefore all the more necessary for us to realize that this Jesus was not a Man after the hearts of the apostles, and therefore it is certain that He was not created by their hearts. It is true that His portrait passed *through* their hands and that we see Him only in the guise in which they present Him; but at the same time He was not moulded and transformed *by* their hands nor after the desires of their hearts.

Attempts have also been made to separate the historical Jesus from His Biblical likeness. But all such attempts are doomed to failure.¹ For which of us has knowledge of any other Christ than the one we have in the apostles’ preaching? Besides, this differentiation between the historical Jesus and the Biblical Christ is futile. For the Biblical portrait exhibits ample proof of fidelity, and can be compared in this respect with any other historical study. Even to this day, this Jesus is too alien from the human heart for us to believe that anything essentially characteristic of the witnesses themselves can have been left clinging to the likeness.

But once again our statement only applies to the presentation of His character as a whole. We cannot haggle about the details in the disciples’ memories of

¹ This is now admitted even by those who were formerly enthusiastic about it. Thus Wellhausen says, “We cannot return to the historical Jesus, even if we would.”

His life. These men were not concerned with historical niceties. Their proclamation of the Gospel dealt with something greater, and they knew well what was the main theme and what was unessential. To them the main fact was that Jesus had died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day. If Jesus was not concerned by the fact that none of His words were noted down, no indisputable sketch of His life left to His people as an everlasting remembrance, why should the disciples seek the living among the dead by digging up the traces of His earthly life? If to-day we still seek for an historical likeness behind the Biblical likeness of Jesus, how can we hope to find it, in the circumstances? Yet there is something unsettling and discouraging to the layman in the false clues followed in such a search, in the constant unavoidable contradictions. Nor can we give credit to the apologists for any penetration in their proof of details. Quite apart from the arbitrariness which their attempts to harmonize and explain too often exhibit, and apart from the contradictions among themselves which arise from this arbitrariness, no conclusion can be reached by such work on details, for new objections continually threaten, and therefore no undisturbed satisfaction can be attained. We should like to free the situation from this disquieting uncertainty. On the grounds we have set forth above, we stand for accepting the Gospel picture *en bloc* and with a good conscience. "He has really lived; no brush wielded by man could paint such a picture, no one could have invented it." This likeness in its entirety is credible to us. The general impression is genuine. For the spirit which transfigures the likeness is not that of any age or people, nor yet of any human brain though possessed of the highest ideals. Nobody invented such a likeness. Because of this fact and its consequences, the disputes about its details seem to us not only altogether vain, but also as unimportant as the grain of sand which the merchant does not trouble to remove when he is weighing

his merchandise by the ton—no, not if he is weighing gold.¹

There is one thing that invariably repels the modern man from the Biblical picture of Jesus—His miracle-working. A thousand reasons may recommend our acceptance of the likeness as being true and credible, but who can give a single reason why we should believe the miracles which are so closely bound up with the story? Surely legend has been palpably busy at this particular point? We believe this is not the case. The miracles may make it peculiarly difficult to trust this likeness, but even so we hope to be able in our discussion of the question to give special proof of them. Let us do so in the next chapter.

¹ "The most faithful likeness, as we know, is not obtained by photography. A portrait by a master hand shows us the man as he is, prejudiced perhaps in some cases, yet more truly than the best photography" (Ewald). And so in the Four Gospels we have four portraits of the Master. Among the grains of sand mentioned above I would put the deficiencies which, according to the will of God, the Gospel narrative exhibits, in spite of its vividness and truthfulness: the possibility of misunderstanding in certain passages and of misleading repetitions and unconscious exaggerations. It is protection enough against such imperfections to keep our eyes fixed on the likeness as a whole, as we have done here, and not to take up time with details. Our observation should be directed again and again towards the whole picture. In other spheres, too, judicious research acts only in this way (cf. Book Two, "The Beauty of the Picture," under "The Development of the Theme," par. 2).

CHAPTER II

THE NECESSITY FOR THE MIRACLES

"If the world had been converted to Christianity without the miracles, this would have been a thing a hundred-fold greater than all the rest." DANTE

WE do not mean to set down at this stage any of the more or less successful arguments in proof of the possibility of miracles which have been advanced from the earliest times. Without in the least belittling such attempts, we are not inclined to repeat them here. But from the position to which our examination has brought us, may we not draw our own conclusions as to the *necessity* for the miracles? It seems to us that this question is more important than that of the possibility of miracles, and we believe that if it were only realized that the miracles were a necessary factor in the life of Jesus, the question as to their possibility would be an easy one. If the modern man is only half convinced, Hamlet's words still carry conviction: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." If we can only show that the miracles are in fact a reasonable part of the life of Jesus—even an essential part—then thousands of people will cease to doubt them. We believe that, from the knowledge we have gained in the course of this study, we shall be able to draw illuminating deductions proving the necessity of the miracles.

There were two respects in which the likeness of Jesus did not come up to the expectations of the people. He was both too high and too lowly to fit in with the ideas of Israel; that was the conclusion arrived at by our examination when we measured Jesus first of all by the judgement of His own people. When we enlarged the circle and tried to see the Nazarene through the eyes of the cultured man of the age in which He lived, we were

forced to conclude that Jesus seemed an actual contradiction of the conception of the wise man of the time; we can read it in the words of Paul, He appeared to them to be a fool. Then further, we reached the assurance that Jesus was not only opposed by the spirit of His age but by the spirit of His disciples. His likeness was engraved only under continual protest from them. And, finally, there is something in the human heart which still remains in constant antagonism to this likeness of Jesus; this is the natural man, in so far as he is stained by sin. Perhaps "the first-born son of the Church among the poets" is right in his judgement when, looking at the picture to which offence clings so closely that every new age once again rejects it, he wrote, "If the world had been converted to Christianity without the miracles, this would have been a thing a hundredfold greater than all the rest." It is our intention to try to realize in detail the truth which lies in these words.

There have been other men whose concern it was to find a hearing among the masses. How did they, seeking to make their influence felt, persuade the people to listen to them? One prophet in Israel went barefoot for months (Isa. xx. 2) so that the people should take notice of him. Another, in the presence of his king, bound horns upon his forehead so that his words might make an impression (1 Kings xxii. 11). For the same reason Elijah the Tishbite was never seen without a rough pelt hanging from his shoulders (2 Kings i. 8). John the Baptist chose the Tishbite's cloak for his own, and this garment, combined with his eccentric way of living (Matt. iii. 4), arrested many a hearer. "They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments," declared Jesus of the Pharisees. They stood praying, too, at street corners, and all that they might be seen of men, and thus exert influence on the people. But how can we explain the tremendous impression which the young and abso-

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lutely natural Man from Nazareth undoubtedly made (Matt. iv. 5; viii. 34; xxi. 8 f.; Mark i. 33, 37, 45; viii. 2 f.; Luke v. 1; 7, 11; viii. 40, 45; xii. 1; John xii. 19) on a whole nation for several years? How did He so fascinate them that it was only after a long time and with extreme caution that His mighty enemies dared to lay hands on Him? Was there something in His appearance that arrested the people? Do we know anything about peculiarities in His bearing? Was there anything about Him to strike the eye? Or did He correspond to their expectations, that is, did He look like the Messiah? And if there was nothing of this, how could such a person succeed in making any impression or in drawing attention to Himself if not by means of miracles? For the beauty of this Man was not obvious to the man-in-the-street, but unfolded itself only gradually and slowly to human eyes; so that even the winning of the Twelve could hardly be understood without His miracle-working; and in fact, it was not achieved without it.

It had been otherwise in the case of John the Baptist. From the first he had had a spiritual kinship with the people. Everything about him came up to expectations, not only his prophetic appearance and his eccentric way of living—that was very much how the people imagined Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah—but also his preaching. “The day of the Lord is at hand; the day of judgement is nigh, bringing fire for some and the out-pouring of the spirit for others.” Were not such words, uttered by this desert preacher, exactly what might be read in the prophets about the days preceding the coming of the Messiah? Thus he required no credentials: “John did no miracles” (John x. 41),¹ yet the whole Jewish countryside flocked to see him.

¹ Besides this, John is an interesting witness against those who are always asserting that the age in which Jesus lived was one in which people were eager for miracles. The age expected miracles from the Messiah, they say, and for that reason attributed them to the Nazarene they took to be the Messiah. Was not John to

How different Jesus was! Where in Him were the characteristics sought by the people? It was certainly the Baptist who, by his estimate of Jesus, raised the simple figure of the passing Nazarene to the Lamb of God in the eyes of John and Andrew (John i. 36). But now it was Simon's turn. Would he have been attracted to this Man, who exhibited nothing of Messianic majesty, if it had not been for His miraculous reading of the disciple's heart: "Thou art Simon, the Son of Jona: henceforth thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation a stone" (John i. 42). The same thing happened with Nathanael. In spite of his honourable, guileless soul (John i. 47)—yes, perhaps because of it—he would have fled if he had not caught a sudden glimpse of Messianic majesty from under the cloak of the Nazarene who stood before him. "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee" (John i. 48). Who could know of the secret hour in the shade of the tree whose long branches swept the ground? Who could know of it but God, to whom Nathanael may have been praying for the coming of the Messiah? And now this Man knew it too!

"Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband," said Jesus at once when He met the strange woman at Jacob's Well (John iv. 18). Was that miraculous knowledge? It was not said without a reason, but to arrest the attention of a frivolous woman as she stood beside the simple Man at the mouth of the well, and to make her listen to what He had to say. "A great multitude followed Him, because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased" (John vi. 2). Would they have followed Him otherwise? And if not, where would He have got the congre-

come in the power of Elias? (Luke i. 17). But, besides Moses, Elias was the greatest miracle-worker among the prophets. Would prophetic signs not be expected from his successor? And if so, why did not this supposedly wonder-seeking people invent miracles for him, if they were not forthcoming?

gation whose ears He needed in the sowing of His divine seed?¹

Let us briefly sum up what we have now gained. Jesus' miracles were necessary, an indispensable adjunct to His advent, which gave so much offence, and which harmonized so little with the idea of the Messiah and with the dearest expectations of His people. Above all, they were necessary just to arrest the people's attention. Very few would have taken much notice of Him without His miracles; and no one would have been inclined to go any further with the Man whose talk of the Messiah's Kingdom sounded such foolishness, or to have confidently chosen Him as the Master of their soul.

* * * * *

There is a second connection in which the necessity for the miracles arose out of the stumbling-block which Jesus offered to many. They were not only necessary in arousing people's attention, but further, in holding it.

The miracles were constantly used to cover something in the Messiah which had greatly offended people. "This Man blasphemes God!" cried His enemies when He claimed power to forgive sins. But a miracle covered up the offensive action. "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. . . . Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine house" (Matt. ix. 6). Nathanael was greatly taken aback when he learned that the Messiah was a Galilean, and even came out of Nazareth (John i. 46). But the Master's quick revelation of secret knowledge helped him to conquer for ever this stumbling-block which had seemed so great. The whole appearance of Jesus seemed so paltry and was in such continual contrast to Israel's hopes of a king. But the miracles exhibited at least some regal majesty; at least occasionally it could be said that He "manifested forth His glory" (John ii. 11). And so when a time came when

¹ Note that the miracle stands altogether in the background as in the passages quoted on p. 127.

all His kingly glory seemed to be withdrawn, His disciples still believed in Him. But how could they have done so if they had not previously caught a glimpse of this majesty?

In the life of Jesus the miracles bore the same importance as the Transfiguration at the beginning of His Passion. Through them God came to the aid of man's weakness, so that the offence in His Son should not make them stumble without hope of recovery.

Think what the situation was. John had proclaimed the Messianic Kingdom to be at hand, Jesus Himself described it as being imminent. What was the use of talk in such a state of affairs? The Baptist was not the only one who wanted to see deeds. Which of them would have been able to resist the doubt which assailed them if Jesus' miracles had not given them at least some comfort and shown to many of them a tiny glimpse of the glories of the Messianic Kingdom? The walking on the sea, which at first glance seems strongly to resemble a miracle of mere ostentation, served this purpose. Jesus had just refused to be acknowledged as the Messianic king (John vi. 15), thus sadly shaking the faith of His followers (v. 66); and so the walking on the sea—which is attested also by Matthew and Mark—was nothing less than an act of compassion, bringing aid to their faltering faith. The miracles were, in fact, absolutely necessary as a supplement in order that this life, the lowliness of which derided all their expectations, might be made to some extent bearable to Jesus' followers.

There is no part of the life of Christ to which the above applies more strongly than His death. Here, if ever, the extraordinary lowliness of His life demanded the glory of the miracles to supplement it and act as a counterpart.¹ Jesus' life had ended in failure, He was crucified, dead, and buried. Clearly He had not brought about what His disciples hoped for. "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." For three days His

¹ Acts xvii. 31, "He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

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work seemed to have collapsed altogether; the little band of His disciples had been broken up, and though they had not ceased to love Him, they saw all the great hopes they had set on Him shattered. Then He revealed Himself to them as in the days of His first miracle, but this time with even more power, conclusively matching His glory against the offence of the Cross itself—and His disciples believed in Him.

Would a translation into another world, a survival of His spirit, not have been enough? Certainly not! His disciples had to see Him; only in this way could the shame and offence of the Cross be redeemed. This also sheds light on why God had to allow the gift of miracle-working in the apostolic age.¹ The world was to realize through these miracles that He in whom we believe is alive. The Resurrected One stood beside His disciples.

From our knowledge of the offence in the life of Jesus we may also see why miracles did not continue in later times and in our own day. The miracles could cease as soon as the disturbing effects of the offence in His likeness had died down. A time came when Christianity had become such a power that people were forced to take notice of it. God no longer needs to resort to miraculous means to turn people's attention to the Nazarene. His wonderful picture is presented to the child while he is still at school. Amidst the bustle of the great city, the cathedral which a master's hand has raised to the honour of the Crucified cannot easily be overlooked. Thus, in our own day, there is enough to arrest people's attention; it is impossible now to think of Jesus being unwittingly and entirely ignored; and therefore God's work, so far as miracles are concerned¹, has ceased.

¹ Read what Peter says about the first miracles he worked (Acts iii. 12 f., 15 f.). Paul's epistles also occasionally give special testimony to such miracles (Rom. xv. 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12). It is difficult to see how the handful of witnesses He left in the world would ever have been listened to if their miracle-working had not saved them from disappearing without ever being heard of.

THE RESULTS OF THE OFFENCE

Further, the peculiar lowliness in the picture of Jesus no longer requires the glory of miracles as an offset. In this connection miracles were only an accessory until the moment when men's eyes were opened to the secret beauty of the Son of God and its power became evident. "Blessed are they who, having not seen, believe." Besides, the greatest stumbling-block which Israel saw in Jesus has altogether vanished from the picture so far as we are concerned; for it is easy for us to realize that His Kingdom is not of this world. For us there is little offence in the picture we have of Him, and what there is is more than counterbalanced by what our conscience at once acknowledges as authenticated.

* * * * *

Once upon a time an astronomer, working in his study, discovered a planet. While he was studying the solar system, it was strongly borne in on the mind of the searcher that at one particular spot another planet had still to trace its orbit; the harmony of the solar system required this heavenly body. Have my readers received along with me the impression that the thoughtful Christian, in studying the life of Christ, would be conscious of just such a gap if the Gospel story had nothing to tell of miracles? Do we not feel with Dante that this life of the Nazarene, with its far-reaching effects (a power which moves nations) and its small means (a phenomenon full of offence and unimpressive), would be incredible without the miracles? Those of my readers who realize this will understand why we set as the conclusion reached by this chapter that the harmony in the life of Jesus demands His miracles; if they were not already there, we should have had to search for them in order to elucidate the problem.

CHAPTER III

THE SUPRA-WORLDLINESS OF JESUS' PERSON

"I am from above."

JOHN VIII. 23

THERE is a second thing besides the miraculous powers with which the life of Jesus was so richly endowed which makes a believing acceptance of His story singularly hard. Jesus said things about Himself which put Him outside the circle of the messengers of God, and which, indeed, separate Him altogether from any accord with the race of man (e.g. "Before Abraham was I am"). These sayings are to be found chiefly in the Fourth Gospel (John iii. 13; viii. 58; xvi. 28; xvii. 5), though they are not lacking in the other Gospels too (Matt. xi. 27; xxviii. 18, 20).

Does the fact of the offence in His likeness, which we have already established, shed light on this peculiarity? The offence which so abounded in His person set Jesus in many other ways far apart from any similarity with the human race. His presence can only be described as that of a foreign body which invaded human society and which humanity, when it remains essentially and merely itself, always tries to reject. But the passages about His unique origin agree in the most noticeable way with the obvious uniqueness of His person, deriving from it support and stay.

Perhaps if we go into the peculiarity of His advent once more we may come to some conclusion as to the mysterious unique form of His person.

There are a number of characteristics in Jesus' conduct which can really only be explained by the fact that He was *the Son*. The actions of a wealthy man are quite different from those of a man who lives from hand to

mouth. A king has more liberty than the man who has to struggle for existence. The son of the house gives his orders differently from a servant. "He who knows no envy, because he is the greatest"—that describes a ruler; but the peculiar dignity of his position sets a king above his fellow-men in more ways than this. Jesus' conduct on many occasions reminds us of such dignity of position. In His words, "I seek not Mine own honour," there is the absolute assurance of one whose rank can neither be taken away nor reduced. Those who have still their way to make may strive and fight for their position; he who is at the top looks on with calmness and indifference, taking no part in the fray. We may regard an uncomplaining acceptance as weakness in a man when we suspect that he is forced to accept; if He had chosen, this Man could have withdrawn from humiliation at any moment; that He did not do so makes Him the more worthy of our respect. Paul quite rightly hesitated to accept gifts; this Man, although He accepted gifts "from many" without hesitation, still remained "the Lord." Just in the same way a king does not run any risk of demeaning himself by the careless acceptance of a present, but it is not so with those of lesser standing. The same may be said about bestowing gifts. We are all so afraid that in giving away anything we may compromise ourselves—give ourselves away; we are so very sensitive about our dignity, so anxious to appear of importance. In this field, too, there is a battle for existence going on all over the world. Wherever we look we find men engaged in fighting for their position. Only the Man we are learning to know here has nothing to strive for, because He is in unopposed possession of all. Here, indeed, we are conscious of the bearing of one who is the Son.

In its wider application to the disciples of Christ also, Christian morality has in it something incomprehensible to those who stand outside. It has too much assurance, resembling too much the behaviour we expect of a wealthy

man. It can, in fact, be practised without injury only by those who have been given by God the status of children. We must first be so placed that we have no fear of the world, requiring neither its support nor encouragement; until we have reached that position the fulfilment of Christian duty is an unnatural thing. The individual must first have his desire for living fully satisfied; until then he is under the ban of natural impulse which forces him to live to himself. But when, in communion with God, he has attained to the fullest satisfaction, he experiences for time and eternity the uttermost security of his own personality, and his position is high enough for him to imitate in his mode of life the magnanimity of Christ. He, too, has the bearing of one who is a son.

Jesus had the semblance of one who of His own free will had taken the form of a man. We are often aware in other great men of an endeavour to shed what is human, or at least to repress it. He who came down amongst us from above was never ashamed of being a man. "His spirit was strong enough to have sealed His lips from giving utterance to the feeling of desolation which beset Him, and to the request that His thirst should be assuaged; but instead, He acknowledged His need." All His life long this rich vein of humanity flowed through His nature. To realize this we have only to remember His weeping at the grave of Lazarus and before the gates of Jerusalem, His deep anguish of spirit after the death of John, and His weariness at Jacob's Well. Jesus chose to be man, and repressed nothing in Himself of that which we call human.

But we find in the likeness of Jesus a number of new characteristics which were a stumbling-block to the world and which yet lead us now to the conclusion that He was the Holy One of God. Now and again we find Him acting in a way which does not recommend itself to our practice, because it would certainly be harmful to our inner life. Here we see His person towering above us in its

matchless strength: His nature is free from that caution which necessity lays on us sinful men. Let us look at just two of these characteristics.

We feel, quite rightly, that we cannot touch pitch without being defiled. We are so easily contaminated by intercourse with publicans and sinners, and we need to be strengthened by association with Jesus before we can imitate Him in this respect without danger. He gave Himself to these people without stint, for He was free and pure and strong enough to stand alone.

Secondly, it is a human weakness that man fears to concern himself too much with the details of life, indeed dare not do so without danger of unfitting himself for the main purpose of his calling. Our Lord's kingly dignity was never more apparent than "when He showed Himself able to cope with the little things of life with all their endless claims on Him, their triviality, at least in the eyes of men, and the excess of the misery they represent. He treated it all without agitation, pettiness, or shrinking." Thus in His whole manner of thought and living He was "separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26).

"The things that be of God, but not those that be of men" (Matt. xvi. 23), are words which can be applied to other traits in the likeness of Jesus. His conduct towards His mother falls in particular under this category. Catholicism has restored to Mary her maternal authority, but in reality Jesus' attitude towards His mother was different. It was because He was to become more to mankind than any other man could be, that He could not be an ordinary son to His mother. She had to forgo her mother-right over this Man whom she was to recognize and adore as her Saviour. And if Jesus demanded of His disciples that they should love Him more than father or mother, if He refused to one of them permission to bury his father in apparent disregard of the fifth commandment, this can only be explained by the fact that here was a Man who, in the demands He made

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on mankind, unhesitatingly put Himself on an equality with God.¹

His whole method of operation, the courage with which He went forth as a sower, can be described by the phrase, "Things that be of God, but not those that be of men." Which of our great historical characters has dared to make his appeal only to the hearts of men, working from within outwards? Have they not all been discouraged by the seeming hopelessness of service? Jesus went His way without haste, in divine assurance. God can afford to wait, and so can His Son. God has His own standard of time; forces which extend beyond death are at His disposal. This is the only way of explaining the otherwise incredible courage of an operation which appears to be so endless.

The originality of His person shines out from the uniqueness of His actions. Let us look at this in His death. This Man did not lack courage in other circumstances. Trusting in His own personality, He confidently confronted even the mighty among His people. No one ever found the Nazarene lacking in that love which is always ready for sacrifice. Why then, when other martyrs can endure torture and death with serenity, did Christ act otherwise? It is no use to say that the real Jesus had no desire to imitate the Stoics' disdain of pain. "Not by ostentation or by unnatural means are men of faith upheld in the hour of death, but by truth, if the Spirit give to them the token of sonship." Why therefore was the

¹ Compare, too, His treatment of the sisters at Bethany. While they are lamenting, If only Jesus had been here, why has He failed us? He says to His disciples, "I am glad that I was not there." If Martha and Mary had heard Him, they would have been stricken to the heart. Could Jesus really be so harsh? "He can and may act with more apparent harshness than any ordinary man may use without being guilty of grave sin. When help is required we must hasten to give it, otherwise we may arrive too late. The only-begotten Son may tarry because it is never too late for Him. He may cause people anguish, because He knows that it is for their good" (H. Hoffmann).

leader surpassed in this respect by His followers? The answer lies in the deepest secret of His personality. If it is true that the wages of sin is death, then death—at least the death that is our lot—must be as unnatural to mankind as sin. In death we see the breath of God's anger, the judgement of the Holy God who turns His face from the sinner. And so the pure and sinless One suffered as only the sinner suffers, because the sin of mankind was laid upon Him, because God did not intervene to shield His Son. His death was to be transformed into the atonement for the sins of the world. Jesus' trembling and dread can only be explained by the unique peculiarity of His person, to whom the anguish and desolation which the sinner rightly suffers was fundamentally alien and abhorrent. That symbolic dread of death at the hands of sinful men is a clear token of a pure and holy personality, deeply and uniquely rooted in the nature of God. He was accustomed to feel, "I am not alone; the Father is with Me," He could say, "I and the Father are one," and so, when in death He felt Himself deserted by God, His trembling was far greater than that of the man who lives without God. From the trembling in Gethsemane and the fear on the Cross there shines a majesty of moral purity and deepest personal communion with God such as no man has ever possessed.

One thing more. Stephen was not the only one who, in the hour of death, felt the presence of God in a way he had never hitherto experienced. Other men and martyrs have been similarly upheld in their hour of need. Jesus, on the contrary, tasted to the full the bitterness of being forsaken by God. His death was not made easy; it was part of His mission to drain the cup to the dregs. This death and all its agony becomes comprehensible only when we realize the meaning of the words, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." ¹

¹ In Harnack's widely read lectures on the "Substance of Christianity," the appreciation of Jesus is not justly followed to its

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Thus, at many points, the likeness of Jesus bears the dimensions of another world, and He always towers head and shoulders above us all. At other points the heavenly proportions are such as we too may attain to. As we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear also the likeness of the heavenly. For it should all lead to this, that God's will should be carried out in us on earth as it will be in heaven. Yet here too we cannot rid ourselves of the conviction that this Jesus was grown in different soil from us. He is a heavenly branch grafted into the tree of humanity. What wonder that the words which He uttered about Himself often seem to proclaim this fact.

conclusion. If, as Harnack asserts, the significance of Jesus lies merely in the proclamation He made (preserved through His life) we should need to have a martyrdom of conviction of quite a different standard. It must be one thing or the other. Either Jesus' hesitation at the approach of death was a blemish (and in Harnack's view this cannot have been the case) or it is just this very trembling, as we believe, that points to a peculiar majesty and a death which is unique in its significance.

CONCLUSION

THE RESULT AN APPEAL TO THE WILL

AMONG the results to which our investigations have led us the most important is that stated in the first chapter of Part Three—the convincing proof of the faithfulness of the report which has been handed down to us. The two chapters which followed were supplementary, concerned with individual difficulties which could be easily disposed of. The faithfulness of the report—what have we gained by the clear demonstration of this fact? Nothing less than an open door. Is there anything to hinder us now from throwing in our lot with this Christ? Can anyone cast a single well-founded suspicion against this figure of light, or believe that on closer examination it might melt into shimmering mist? The main business still is to follow Him: Child of man, it is for you to enter through this door!

Reason can no longer stand as a hindrance in the way. It must be clear to our reason that we have here no picture faked by the desires of the human heart. Here we may learn to know the God who acts in and through Christ. Here there is hope of coming to a personal conviction about God—here, and probably nowhere else.

If reason can no longer guard the door against entrance, the only question that remains is whether something else which we have not taken into account may still keep us away, and everyone should make it his duty to examine this sincerely for himself.¹

Only those who feel a need of God will be willing to

¹ "Proofs can make no man a Christian. The most they can do is to direct his attention to Christ, or bring him to the point of deciding whether he will believe or turn away. In the end the chief thing is to keep one's mind open to the divine testimony of the Word."

THE RESULT AN APPEAL TO THE WILL

throw in their lot with Christ, and this need stands as the antithesis to satiety and full satisfaction. Men of to-day do not always seek satisfaction in the lowest and coarsest pleasures of the flesh—although this kind of satisfaction might still be found to occupy a preponderant place in the minds of men. But the finer and nobler pleasures offered, for instance, by art and learning, may give the same feeling of satiety. And that is the enemy of need. Arguments such as we have been employing can never, indeed, create such a need, but where the feeling is already present—and God does much in our own day to awaken it by His guiding and disposing of our lives—and in cases where reason sets itself up against Christ, there we can help, and we desire to do so, saying to the man in need, “Reason cannot shut this door against you; take a good look at it, it stands open! Therefore, go in!”

There is still a piece of advice we may give to the man whose sense of need has been awakened, whose desire for satisfaction is unstilled, for the human heart was made for God and can only find its satisfaction in Him. To such a seeker we would say, Put yourself without prejudice into touch with Christ. Be quiet, so that the Gospel narrative may convince your mind. Do the will of Jesus, follow His advice. That is the way along which the modern man must go in order to “see” what His disciples “saw” so long ago.

God has so ordered it that the most important work in life has to be done by each man for himself, and that the basis of religious belief must be found by everyone through personal experience. Come, therefore, and see; make for yourself in this respect the decisive experience. Then comes the last assurance of need satisfied: surrender to the Christ of the Bible brings light and comfort to the soul, consecrates the will, strengthens the conscience; and in this way it is finally the likeness of Jesus itself which, by the living force within it, gives us the last and strongest proof of its truth and uniqueness.

Let this, then, be the sane and healthy process: first we

THE RESULTS OF THE OFFENCE

believe in Christ because of the Bible; the Gospel can be made so credible—and our whole exposition has had this as the end in view—that we can confidently enter into touch with the Christ it portrays. But the result will be that we shall believe the Bible because of Christ; when we come close to Him we shall be conquered by His presence. For He satisfies our deepest need.

BOOK TWO

**THE BEAUTY OF THE PICTURE:
THE GLORY OF JESUS EXHIBITED ANEW
TO SCORNER AND ADMIRERS**

"Why did He write nothing? Why did He dictate nothing? His gift to His people was not what He said but what He is—it is the gift of Himself."

KÄHLER

"The positiveness of Christianity is rooted in the positiveness of Christ's personality. The miracle of the divinity of Christianity has its basis in the miracle of the personality of Jesus."

HEILER, *Professor of Comparative Theology*

"The human race has no memory which can be remotely compared with this one."

LEOPOLD VON RANKE

"If an inquiry were to be put to Christians as to what they would miss most if their religion were taken from them, the answer would probably be unanimous : Jesus Christ Himself."

GRÜTZMACHER

"Of His fulness have we all received."

JOHN I. 16

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

BOOK Two is to deal with a bigger subject. Book One discussed the characteristics of Jesus which do not please us, which even to-day offend against our own feelings, because they are contrary to flesh and blood. This "offence" in Him is, however, of significance to us. For even in the present day it proves to us in the fullest sense that Jesus came "from a far country" and entered into the human race as a complete "alien." Though the majesty of His likeness goes far beyond all the dimensions of man, the "offence" which we can still perceive in it shows that no human hand was at work to "glorify" it, and so guarantees the genuineness of the foundation.

But what we mean to examine now is something still greater. We mean to turn our eyes from the "offence" and direct them to the "beauty" of the likeness. The "offence" did indeed reveal His glory now and again, and it is this glory that we mean to trace in all its manifestations.

As Ihmels rightly says, "It cannot be earnestly enough pointed out that if Jesus really is what the Church believes Him to be, He must be able to convince us of this reality by the reality of His own person." It is just this glorious reality of Jesus with its convincing power that we wish to show forth in this book.

We are indeed well aware of the warning that lies in Luther's words, spoken in the last years of his life: "A new tongue and a new language are needed to speak of Christ and the newly revealed humanity in Him." Yes, indeed, a new tongue! At the beginning of the new age which we hope God is sending us we should like to show in many fresh aspects Him who is ever new to each new age, yet is ever one with the "Ancient of days, which changeth not" (Dan. vii. 9, 13). It is because of this that each new age cannot live without Him.

THE BEAUTY OF THE PICTURE

May nothing good be lacking in the days to come, but above all may we never lack "Him who is indispensable to all ages." ¹

¹ In making use of this book it is desirable to turn up and read all the passages quoted from the Gospel where the context is not already well known to the reader. The whole richness of this most marvellous life can and will only be fully appreciated in this way. The index of passages at the end of the book will be welcome to the reader of the Bible. I believe the present volume may be of service to him too as a book of reference.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE new age to which we looked forward has come upon us in different guise from what we expected. Much which seemed to us important now lies shattered around us.

Can we hope for any benefit in such a time of dejection and depression? Indeed we can, if our inner life attains to new riches. The surest foundation for a new ascent will be laid if, in the present darkness, His figure is irradiated anew for our people. There will be a blessed fulfilment of the prophet's words: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, they that dwell in the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." And so our people may wait in patience, but also in faith for that which Isaiah prophesies further: "They joy before Thee. . . Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden." But first we must point the way to this light of salvation—and that is what the present volume hopes to do.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

GOETHE once said: "What is fruitful is true." What has been more fruitful in the history of the world than the likeness of Jesus? How true, then, it must be!

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEME

It is ancient wisdom that Descartes has expressed concisely when he writes: "All human learning consists alone in exact observation." Is there any point towards which mankind should more continually direct their exact observation than the Man whose coming was the greatest event in human experience? Jesus gave us no new doctrine, He gave us Himself. He was the most tremendous fact in the history of the world, a wonderful reality. And this reality must be *seen* before it is believed.

In our day a great deal is talked about Jesus, and He Himself, by His advent, desires to speak to us. The most fascinating questions are often put forward concerning Him, but the chief question is whether we actually see Him. We are apt to treat Him like some possession which we have had for so long that habit has dulled our eyes to its brightness. So we must try to keep the wonderful reality which His Incarnation signifies continually fresh before our eyes.

No one must suppose that this task is easily accomplished. Our missionaries tell us what difficulty they have in penetrating into the manner of thought of a foreign people. How much greater is our difficulty with regard to Jesus, who in the deepest fundamentals is much more alien from us than any native of Africa! Nor may we persuade ourselves that it would ever be possible to exhaust the rich content of the reality given us in Jesus. Every age has discovered something new about Him, and will continue to do so as long as the different generations of mankind follow each other. For each generation sees Him with its own eyes; and because these are directed towards some new thing about Him which is of particular value to them, being suited to their own special need,

therefore new discoveries will continually be made in this reality which is Jesus. If this is so, however, it is the duty of every age to watch for the peculiar aspect of Jesus which is to be revealed. And for every age there will be a fresh revelation of His glory, which may be just one aspect of it, but will certainly be suited to the needs of the age. At the same time, every new revelation will be richer than the last, as long as those things which former generations discovered for themselves are not set aside.

We moderns have grown weary of speculation and theories. They seem to us like a web which is easily torn because it is too heavily encumbered with the tenuous woof of human ideas. To us a great fact is of much more importance than the most beautiful idea, for it places us on the firm ground of tangible reality. And so, in what we are about to say of Jesus, we shall be very careful not to deal merely with vague ideas, being rather concerned to lay hold of Him in His reality—His life, His rich, full life—without losing too much of this wealth in the operation. That is the goal we have in mind: we mean to observe the reality of Jesus as it has forcefully engraved itself in history.

His reality, yes, but not in the form of a story of His life. Such attempts were made often enough during last century, but as a whole they were a failure. The final reason for this lay not so much in the records of the life of Jesus, but above all in the uniqueness of the life itself. Yet the likeness of Jesus confronts us vividly enough for us to be able to immerse ourselves in its riches.

Certainly the inner glory of Jesus is of immeasurable value to us in this process. Here we see the richest life known to mankind spread out before us. It is a fact which we need not take on hearsay from others, but which we can examine to-day for ourselves; a reality which lies before our eyes; the uniform and perceptible picture of a life which has not its like in the world or in the history of the world. But we are not forgetting that the apostles saw more in this Man than merely inner glory, and that

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it was this "more" that raised them up again after they had broken down in face of the Cross.

He who wishes to paint the likeness of Jesus has only one set of colours—the Gospel narrative which has come down through the ages. Are the colours genuine? Anyhow, they have the undeniable advantage over any others that in part at least they guarantee their own genuineness. For the whole *inner* glory of Jesus is its own guarantee. Our conscience gives its assent to this. This Holy One did not originate in the brain of sinners. But we can confidently approach the records of the life of Jesus with the same demands that we make on other historical documents. There has been a wave of reaction with regard to them. From the storms of last century they have emerged scathless, as first-class records. We have learned, too, to estimate aright the value of the variations in the reports given by the Gospels. Certainty as to the truth of any historical fact grows in proportion as we have independent accounts of it. And again, the independence of the reports is made clear by their variations. It is therefore a matter of importance to us that in the four Gospels we can actually hear the manifestation of Jesus in all sorts of different inflections. Untroubled, fully convinced of the truth, not anxiously concerned that each little feature should agree with another, the Gospels recount to us the tidings of Jesus so that they may win souls for the Saviour: further, as something that cannot be disputed and that no sensible person would dream of disputing.¹ How contrary this is to false records! With these some sort of scheme has first to be worked out, and people repeat it to themselves again and again until they settle how it should be presented.

¹ Verschieden. Es hat nichts zu bedeuten,
Sie hatten nicht gleiche Fähigkeiten.
Doch damit können sich die Christen
Bis zu dem jüngsten Tage fristen (Goethe).

Different? That signifies nothing, they had not the same capabilities. Yet Christians will dispute about it till the Judgement Day.

THE BEAUTY OF THE PICTURE

We are also firmly convinced that the Fourth Gospel was written by John, and we will rate it as the testimony of an eye-witness. In its fundamentals the Johannine likeness of Christ is, in our opinion, similar to that drawn by the synoptic Gospels. It moves on the same religious plane. But we do not forget that John was an old man when he wrote it, whose spiritual experiences were probably over, and, writing in accordance with the historical conclusions reached by the Christian Church after decades of thought, he represents the Jesus who walked this earth as the Christ whom he now bears in his heart, and whom he desires to instil into the hearts of others. He, indeed, sees more deeply into the glory of Jesus than the other evangelists. But, conscious of the unity he has attained with the risen Christ, he reproduces His thoughts with greater freedom than they.¹

* * * * *

The peculiarities of the evangelical narrative which we have just mentioned, and which it shares in common with all really vivid and true reports, lays a restraint on our attempt to bring out the glory of Jesus. (The narrative, too, conscious of its own faithfulness, exhibits a certain carefreeness.) We must not be too much concerned with details. What we mean to bring out has been corroborated to us by its general appeal. There must be characteristics in the likeness of Jesus which can be found over and over again. This is, indeed, the method employed by all modern research in natural philosophy in attaining certainty; the emergence of one single fact cannot prove anything; it must be observed repeatedly. Actually because of the obvious lack of care in the transmission of details and trivialities, and the gaps which God's will has allowed to remain in the narrative—a trait which it has in common with all transmissions of the kind—it is not

¹ Cf. with this section the first part of the book, with its attempt to assure the credibility of the Gospel report from another side.

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enough to examine only single parts of the picture;¹ all the more because there are almost unlimited possibilities of our giving a false significance to details. On the other hand a majority or, better still, a great abundance of similar observations lead us to a secure judgement. A single twig may be easily snapped, but a bundle of twigs resists all efforts to break it. Let us not therefore be content with a single word or passage, but rather take whole bundles of sayings which fundamentally resemble each other. Then, by constantly considering the general effect, we may bring out the details in the likeness. We know how exact observation may be achieved in these days, and mean to act accordingly. In employing this method we will go cautiously, being careful to regard a result as assured only when it has been repeatedly proved by observation.

* * * * *

At the same time, while guarding against the possibility of false observation, we are determined not to shut our eyes to anything we may encounter in our study. No prejudiced opinion arming itself with the weapons of the philosophy which may be current at the moment, announcing with the voice of the strong ones of the earth what is possible and what is not, must be permitted to blind our eyes. Where would modern scientific research have come to if it had worked on these lines? If such research happens upon anything that it cannot understand, nor fit in with previous discoveries, it admits it as a fact, even though at the moment it is an incomprehensible truth. In accordance with that sense of reality for

¹ We must take account of the fact that even in the Gospel narrative misunderstandings may arise, there may be unconscious exaggeration in certain cases, and misleading repetitions are possible. But who can say with certainty where these occur? We shall not therefore enter into the probabilities which are such a bone of contention, but will rather seek to secure our object in the way proposed above.

THE BEAUTY OF THE PICTURE

which our age is noted, let us too, in our study of the life of Jesus, allow the facts to speak, being careful only to apprehend them exactly. The dust of prejudice lies with deathly stillness over the thought of so many people with regard to our subject. By their own prejudice they shut off any impression they might receive of Christ. How useful it might be if this dust were to be disturbed!

Much attention is paid in modern times to the frame of Jesus' picture. The world of His time has been exactly and faithfully investigated and described. Then the picture has been cut to suit the frame, for, after all, they must have the same inspiration. The first result of this was that the picture became very small. Then further doctrinal investigations were made, and again the picture was cut to fit this new frame, for it must be in harmony with the spiritual doctrine of mankind. And for the second time it was very small—so small that Frenssen actually dared to suggest that the likeness of Jesus was drawn by a shipwrecked pastor. But let us follow Descartes' advice in making "exact observation," leaving it to others to find the frame for the picture. Perhaps Luther's Second Article provides a more fitting frame than many think.

One thing we must remember. According to the laws of thought, exact observation does not necessarily lead to indisputable conclusions. Truth is so many-sided that it cannot be exhaustively expressed by a single mode of thought. Different methods of observation may be allowed if they are based on indisputable experience and when it is clear that we are confronted by an insoluble problem of existence. We take up the modest position of believing that the hidden depths of existence can only be approached from many different sides.¹ We need not be surprised, therefore, if the reality of Jesus' person is so great that it can only be fully described from two apparently contra-

¹ "Truth can unite many paths, for it resembles the bisecting point of all radii" (Dante).

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dictory points of view. Once again we are forced to think of Luther's Second Article.

Finally, all advance in knowledge is retarded so long as we cannot rid ourselves of the idea that such and such a thing cannot possibly have taken place. Such prejudiced treatment with regard to Jesus signifies the determined resolve not to see Him as He is. We do not wish unscientifically or consciously to limit and determine the extent of the possible and the actual. When we discover something extraordinary, all we can do is to marvel at it.

It will be advisable in our observation of the glory of Jesus to begin with what is external and least remarkable. Let us follow the example of the mountaineer and make a gradual ascent. This has the advantage that anyone whose breath fails him may stay behind. But we hope even if he has not reached the heights he will be convinced that he has never followed a more profitable path, with more splendid prospects. But many will feel their strength increase on the gradual ascent, until they push forward to the mystery of the mountain and see the heavens spread wide before them. We may receive power from this Man if we touch but the hem of His garment. And those to whom He opens His heart will rejoice even over the richly embroidered border of His royal robe. This gives me courage to speak with confidence even of the small and external facts concerning the Nazarene.

Pointing to Himself, Jesus once said, "In this place is One greater than the Temple" (Matt. xii. 6). Israel's holy place had always been divided into three parts—the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. So with Jesus let us first speak of the outer court of His personality, then enter its holy place, and finally worship in the mysterious holy of holies.

Faith is always a leap across a chasm. But if a man has no springboard constructed out of knowledge he cannot hope to reach the other side (Joh. Reinke).

PART ONE
IN THE OUTER COURT
THE NATURAL ENDOWMENTS OF JESUS

CHAPTER I

JESUS' PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

"If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole."

MARK V. 28

AGAIN and again men have wondered about the outward appearance of Jesus. But the answers to such questions were apt to be taken from misunderstood passages in the Old Testament, and they differed according to the passage from which information was thus arbitrarily extracted. The man who went by the verse in the 45th Psalm, "Thou art the fairest among the children of men," spoke of course of the triumphant bearing in His appearance; while the man who consulted the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, where we read of the servant of the Lord, "He hath no form or comeliness," pictured Jesus as poverty-stricken and mean in appearance, a Man of feeble physique.

Uhde had the conviction that only by breaking away from the commonly accepted idea of outward beauty in Jesus would His spiritual beauty dawn effectively on the beholder, unalloyed with disturbing outward features. But in his best moments the same writer conceived of a race of men in whom outward beauty was so combined with spiritual loveliness that the inner beauty seemed to shine through and irradiate the external appearance. What if this were the case with Jesus, His spiritual loveliness being revealed in His physical appearance? One can see that such theorizing leads us nowhere.

Yet a great deal in the narrative seems to indicate that even Jesus' outward appearance was full of majesty. The incident which took place in His native town is particularly informative on this point. Enraged by His words, the Nazarenes thrust Him out of the town until they were near to a piece of rocky ground where they meant to

"cast Him down headlong." Up till then Jesus had allowed Himself to be pushed and hustled, but at the critical moment it seemed as though He suddenly grew in stature. Thus He strode through the excited crowd, every inch a king (Luke iv. 30). How different was the apostle Paul's experience on a similar occasion, for he was stoned (Acts xiv. 19)! To be sure, his frail appearance made him no Jupiter, in contrast to Barnabas (Acts xiv. 12).

More than once in Jesus' life the same sort of thing happened as in Nazareth. We need only call to mind how He plaited a scourge of cords and, with inimitable dignity, cleansed the Temple courts of defilement (John ii. 15). And on the last night the men who had been sent to take Him shrank back, awed by the majesty in His speech, glance, and appearance (John xviii. 6).

I have mentioned His glance, for it seems to me that we are not without some information about Jesus' eyes. He was aware of the power that lay in His eyes. Why else did He look around upon them all in the synagogue at Galilee if not that He might pierce the dull conscience of His opponents with His deep, penetrating gaze? (Luke vi. 10; another case xx. 17). That day His eyes blazed in anger which soon gave way to profound sadness (Mark iii. 5). Or read the 10th chapter of Mark. With His eyes He emphasized to His disciples the difficult teaching about the danger of riches (v. 23), and impressed on their hearts the comfort of belief in a God to whom nothing is impossible (v. 27). Yes, He knew the power of His eyes. When in the court of the High Priest Peter's senses were in a whirl, Jesus led him by the power of His eyes to the redeeming door of bitter repentance (Luke xxii. 61). Thus He must have had something of the kingly glance which we know of in another historical character (cf. also John viii. 7, with the result in v. 9).

Such theories do not lead us to any distinct picture of Jesus' outward form. But there is one fact about His physical equipment of which we have ample proof—and the proof is of importance against much hostile criticism

of to-day¹—namely, that Jesus had excellent physical health. This has not been the rule with all great founders of religion. Mohammed was a sick man. He became a prophet as the result of an illness, and all his life he was sickly in body and spirit (suffering from epilepsy and hysteria). Buddha was a man at least no longer in his first youth, his bodily strength was weakened. There is never a hint in the life of Jesus that He was ever ill. We know a good deal about the life of His principal apostle, and we come repeatedly on traces of illness there (Gal. iv. 13, 14; 1 Cor. ii. 3; 2 Cor. x. 10; xii. 7). We know, too, of all kinds of physical weakness even in the apostles of whose lives we have scarcely any account (Phil. ii. 26; 1 Tim. v. 23; 2 Tim. iv. 20). In the Gospels we read that Peter's mother-in-law lay sick of a fever (Mark i. 30), and we know that malaria was prevalent in the neighbourhood of Jericho; yet we never meet a trace of illness in our Lord's own life. Isaiah's prophecy about Him who should bear our infirmities (Isa. liii. 4) could only be applied to Jesus by connecting it with His healing of sick folk (Matt. viii. 17).

The fact that we are told nothing about His being ill is of course no absolute proof that Jesus was always free from ill-health. If we are to combat recent attacks on His health we must look for better evidence. Jesus was an early riser, and a Man not affected by a sleepless night. As soon as it was day or, as Mark puts it, "in the morning, a great while before day," He left the town to find a solitary place where He might commune alone with God. Often enough this followed a busy day's work (Luke iv. 42; Mark i. 35). And how did sleepless nights affect Him? The great, fateful speech in the synagogue of Capernaum (John vi. 25-59) followed after a night full of intense inner emotion (vi. 15). In His trial before Pilate is there any trace of the consequences of the foregoing sleepless night, with its profound mental disturbance, which might

¹ In recent times Jesus' health has been attacked, in particular by several alienists.

have been expected to affect the clarity of His thought? But at other times, too, how often we find Him watching through the night (Mark vi. 48; Luke vi. 12; John iii. 2). We may even suppose that this carpenter's apprentice with His comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures must have employed His nights in study, if Shakespeare's passage in *Henry V* can be applied in this case:

Which¹ no doubt
Grew, like the summer grass, fastest at night
Unseen yet crescive in his faculty.

There is another observation we may make which leads us to conclude that Jesus was physically robust. We mean His long journeys on foot. Jesus was an active and vigorous walker. Think, for instance, of one of the longest of these journeys when, starting from Tyre and striking the great caravan road from Sidon to Damascus leading across Lebanon and Antelebanon, He returned to the Lake of Galilee from the east, by Caesarea Philippi (Mark vii. 31). This was accomplished in a hot country, and He was generally deep in conversation with His disciples as He walked. We can also reckon the physical exertion of which Jesus was capable if we take another of His journeys. I refer to His last ascent from Jericho to Jerusalem. This is a distance which takes about six hours walking, the road rising during that time to a height of over 3,000 feet. It is without shade, leading through solitary, rocky country. At the beginning of the day came the healing of the blind man in Jericho (Mark x. 46), and the journey was made in company with the crowd of excited caravans going up to the feast. And yet that same evening, without trace of weariness, Jesus was present at a banquet in His honour among the circle of His friends from Bethany (John xii. 1-2; cf. xii. 12).

Often, too, we find Him, after an exhausting day's work, climbing a hill in the evening (Mark vi. 46; Luke vi. 12),

¹ In our case a knowledge of the Scriptures.

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here, too, showing Himself to be a strong, healthy man of the people.

We are led to the same view of Jesus' physical robustness if we can picture to ourselves the manner of life He had to live. This man was in fact worse off than the foxes and the birds (Matt. viii. 20). For they have their holes and their nests, but, from the day He left His father's house in Nazareth, He was homeless. Certainly He did not disdain to take shelter while leading this wandering life. But it happened at times that people refused Him entrance (Luke ix. 53), and we may be sure that He was not always so well treated as in Martha's hospitable house (Matt. xxi. 17; Luke x. 38; John xii. 2). Often, too, He did not knock for admittance at any door, for we have testimony enough that He gladly and often spent the night in the open air (Luke xxi. 37; John xviii. 2). We must not imagine that this was altogether pleasant even in that warm country. Why, for instance, on the night of the betrayal, did the soldiers make a fire of coals and warm themselves at it? (Mark xiv. 54). Hardened as He was, Jesus bore even the coldness of the nights without much concern, even though He cannot have felt it to be a comfortable way of living. Then He warned the frail young scribe not to become one of His followers before considering the hardships he would have to endure (Matt. viii. 19 f.). Even from a physical point of view it is not everyone who could act as Jesus did in Goethe's description, "Loving above measure to hold His court in the open streets."

We have other proofs of Jesus' physical powers of endurance. There is the forty days' fast in the desert with all its privations and fatigue (Matt. iv. 1, 2). There is also His ability to go without food when His calling required it [Mark iii. 20; vi. 31; John iv. 31 ff.—here (v. 6), though He was weary after a long march]. And finally there is His capacity for sleeping where and when He would. After His long parable-sermon He took ship to cross the Lake (Mark iv. 35). Other boats belonging to people who

meant to accompany Him or had just left Him crowded round (v. 36). Yet He was able to sleep at once, in the stern of the ship, on a pillow made by the seat of the rowers (v. 38). He slept so soundly that the rising storm did not awaken Him, and He was still sleeping when the waves began to beat into the boat. This is the healthy fatigue and deep slumber of a child of nature, who knows nothing of nerves. Yet at the same time this Man could stay awake when others were overcome by sleep (Mark xiv. 37, 40). And He could throw off His weariness entirely when some human soul called for His assistance (John iv. 6 ff.). For, in the last resort, He alone is the begetter of the words: "I have no time to be weary."

Not only in recent times but in earlier ages interest has sometimes been taken in emphasizing Jesus' physical strength and striking health, and connecting them with His miraculous healing powers. Much is indeed known of success achieved by famous or unknown hypnotists. But such attempts are always discredited by one fact: all the evangelists agree in their reports that it was not necessary for Jesus to lay His hands on or touch in any way the sick folk whom He healed (Matt. viii. 13; Mark vii. 29; Luke xvii. 14; John iv. 50). We are justified, however, in emphasizing that Jesus went without concern among the crowds of such people and, moved with pity, touched even a leper without fear of infection (Matt. viii. 3). And we may also remember that, presuming on His strong nature, He could actually give out sympathy to all the sufferers who crowded round Him (Matt. ix. 36; xv. 32; xx. 34; Luke vii. 13). This is something that so affects and chafes the nerves that busy doctors and nurses often consciously suppress their natural sympathy for fear of breaking down.

In all these cases Jesus exhibits the rude health of a simple man of the people. We are aware of this when He speaks almost scornfully of the soft clothing in kings' houses (Matt. xi. 8), or when He declines for His disciples (and at the same time, of course, for Himself) the wearing

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of two coats, such as it was customary for better-class people to wear while travelling (Mark vi. 9). Without doubt we find in Him, too, the shrinking from death which the fresh, vital man of the people experiences, who knows nothing of *ennui*, over-eating, sloth of spirit, or degeneracy. This Man, only about thirty years of age, and in the full vigour of robust manhood, also felt the unnaturalness of death (Luke xii. 50; John xii. 27).

We cannot close these remarks without having spoken of the suffering Jesus. The strain on His physical strength on the last night and on the following morning was something far beyond the ordinary. Disregarding the mental suffering—although the word “Gethsemane” immediately calls to mind the deepest anguish, and added to that there was the hour of parting at the Last Supper and His experience with His disciples—what physical endurance was required even to face the three trials following close one after the other (John xviii. 24, 28), and the repeated mishandling which Pilate allowed to run its course in order to save Jesus (John xix. 4). This reached such a pitch that Pilate himself, moved and shaken by the pitiful sight, cried out, “Behold, what a Man!” (John xix. 5). The scourging was a horrible operation which often ended in death. Jesus did not succumb to it, although the cruelty of mockery was added to His suffering—perhaps the only time in the history of the world that this occurred to such an extent during an orderly trial by law. After Jesus had borne all this the heavy timbers for the cross were laid on His bleeding shoulders (John xix. 17) for Him to carry along a road leading, as we can be almost certain, from the Fort of Antonia down into a valley, more pronounced than it is now, and winding steeply up the opposite side. If Jesus’ strength really gave out, and He broke down on this weary road, who can be surprised? But we do not know this for certain. Perhaps the soldiers who accompanied Him merely found the procession too slow (Mark xv. 21).

In conclusion, we find that in Jesus there was no lack

of harmony between body and spirit. He never experienced that profound discord under which the older man suffers so much. His body was a willing and apt tool for His spirit. But we can hardly say that our artists have always had a clear vision of this sane, robust, and physically fit Man, when we think of the many pictures they have given us of a feeble, frail Jesus.

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What about the fitness of the mind in this body? Here, too, there is ample material at our disposal for a clear and certain answer.

We know that Mohammed spent a good part of his life in realms beyond those of clear consciousness. Was Jesus, too, often "out of Himself"? It is significant that the Baptist gave the impression of being possessed by a higher power, but that in comparison with His contemporary Jesus appeared to be an ordinary, everyday kind of man (Matt. xi. 18, 19).

But do not the apparitions at His baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration point clearly to Jesus being sometimes in a state of ecstasy or trance? Here we must first of all say a word about visions. The visions in the Bible have nothing to do with hallucinations. These are always illusions, and often enough experienced by unhealthy, morbid people. The Biblical visions, on the contrary, were based on a God-produced reality, and were not by any means always accompanied by trance or loss of consciousness. Jesus was never in His life an ecstatic. It is even very doubtful whether He Himself experienced the two visions in question. That on the Mount of Transfiguration was obviously meant to influence the disciples (Mark ix. 9; 2 Pet. i. 16); and according to the Johannine report at least (John i. 32-34), it was only the Baptist who saw the apparition during the baptism.

Paul was certainly an ecstatic. With gratitude to God he confesses that he talked with tongues more than all the Corinthians (1 Cor. xiv. 18). And in the Second

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Epistle to the Corinthians he proudly and joyfully describes a trance which he had experienced (xii. 1-4). It is well known in what high esteem the Early Church held this gift. When the speaking with tongues ceased, many saw in it a proof of the growing worldliness of the Church, and there arose a great body of opinion which held that prophetic speech was necessary and attempted to revive it. The fact that such a gift was never attributed to Jesus is a proof of the faithfulness of the Gospel reports. He knew nothing of visions and revelations, nor of the trembling which seized the Old Testament prophets when the spirit of the Lord came upon them. And He never tried to infect others with the confused speech of a confused mind.

Yet have we not at least one hint that He too was sometimes, or at least on one occasion, "out of Himself"? Was He too an ecstatic saint? Mark tells us quite distinctly that His relatives once followed Him to try to bring Him home by force, saying, "He is beside Himself" (Mark iii. 21). But on what did they base this judgement? Not on what they had seen, but only on what had been told them. And what really alarmed them was merely this, they knew that He was neglecting His meal-times (v. 20). There are many people to whom eating is so important that they think a man must be crazy if, in the joy of his calling, he happens to forget a meal. Yet on that very day Jesus was the one clear, sober-minded person in a wildly excited crowd (v. 22).

But if He were no ecstatic, never "out of Himself" in the full meaning of the words, was He not at least a fanatic? We can make a great number of observations which must put to silence all talk of fanaticism.

Those of my readers who know the ample descriptions in the Jewish apocalypse of the lordly life of the blessed believers in the next world, or have read the sensuous speeches of Mohammed in which he paints heaven and hell in glowing colours, will be struck by the great contrast in the quiet lucidity and deep seriousness of Jesus' mind.

On one side exuberant descriptions, on the other a sensitive restraint and emphasis laid on the one thing needful: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning" (Luke xii. 35; Matt. xxv. 13).

In the days of Jesus fanaticism was the fashion, the idea of the patriotic Messiah-ideal had made many a man a visionary. After the feeding of the five thousand and during His entry into Jerusalem waves of fanatical enthusiasm swept round Jesus. The people were very ready to invite Him to judge in a question of inheritance, knowing that His word would be accepted (Luke xii. 13 f.). Jesus never allowed the clearness of His mind to be affected for an instant. It is flying right in the face of truth to say that the religious train of thought of His age had any effect of this sort on Him and His disciples.

In the Psalms and the prophets oppressed believers were often led to expect Jehovah's aid when He should come in the time of salvation. Out of such prophecies grew the hopes of believers that, with the coming of the Messiah, persecution and oppression would come to an end. From the beginning of His ministry Jesus very often spoke quite calmly and soberly of the persecution which His followers would have to endure (Matt. v. 10, 44; x. 23; Mark iv. 17; x. 30; Luke xi. 49; xxi. 12; John xv. 20), and predicted His own death as a certainty. A kingdom of God with persecution, and even a dying Messiah—it was an unheard-of idea! How far removed from fanaticism must the Man have been who knew Himself to be God's chosen One, and yet revealed such prospects for Himself and His followers—prospects so utterly strange to them that even His most trusted friends could not reconcile themselves to the idea.

Even at the height of the popular enthusiasm Jesus was not deceived as to the people's state of mind. In the faces of His hearers He read such a lack of susceptibility to the mystery of the Kingdom of God, so different from their expectations, that in His great parable-sermon He cried out in anguish, "To them it is not given to know the

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mysteries of the kingdom of heaven . . . therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand" (Matt. xiii. 11, 13). None of Jesus' words show Him to be further removed from fanaticism than that profoundly earnest passage, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii. 8). How differently Mohammed and Buddha regarded the future! But Jesus knew what demands He had to make on the human heart and how it would rebel against them. He knew the fields He had to sow and He had no illusions.

It has always been one of the accompanying signs of religious fanaticism that the person concerned has no fear of death. There were times in the Church when believers thronged to martyrdom. Jesus' sensibility was so natural that His carnal nature shrank rather from suffering (Luke xii. 50); and Peter tempted Him seriously when he showed Him "the things that be of man" (Matt. xvi. 23). None of the Gospels leave us in any doubt that Jesus found death hard, and there is nothing wrong in shrinking from suffering and death. Even in Jesus' case it would only have been wrong if it had made Him resist God's will. But there is no sign in His story of the easy death of the fanatic.

There are still one or two observations to be made, quite shortly, which will help us to recognize a sober common sense in Jesus rather than any fanaticism. He never speaks scornfully of money or the value of money, but exacts faithfulness even in "that which is least" (Luke xvi. 10). He does not act like a dreamer with no interest in this world, but Himself employs the wisdom of the serpent (Matt. x. 16). He knows how to circumvent Herod "the fox" (Luke xiii. 32). He escapes into the Gentile country at the right moment; He goes secretly up to the feast at the time of the Passover (John vii. 10); and He makes a private arrangement beforehand about the upper room so that He may be undisturbed with His disciples (Mark xiv. 13 ff.).

In contrast to the fanaticism of the communist, He, the Man of sober sense, is convinced that, when all is said and done, the possession of private property is in the interests of mankind—the hireling is careless, but a man will give up his life for his own property (John x. 12). He reasonably suggests that the builder of a tower or the leader of an army should first count the cost, so that the work should not be held up after it has been started (Luke xiv. 28). In spite of Isaiah's prophecy of the Servant of the Lord being the light of the Gentiles, He soberly and scrupulously limits His own work to Israel (Matt. xv. 24). He must often, too, have used His own common sense in deciding about the necessary marketing for their daily wants—otherwise the misunderstandings among the disciples in this respect would have made things impossible (Mark viii. 14 f.). Calmly and without hesitation (very different from some fanatics of modern times) He took the oath required of Him before the judge, even although He believed the rule of perfection to be "Swear not at all" (Matt. xxvi. 63; v. 34). In the house of Jairus, when they stood round Him dazed with astonishment, He calmly reminded them that the still weakly child must be fed (Mark v. 43).

With what observant eyes and healthy sense of the beautiful He always looked at the world and at nature! Bernard of Clairvaux could ride for a whole day through one of the loveliest little bits of the whole earth—on the banks of the Lake of Geneva—and in the evening a question put by one of his companions showed that he did not even know he had been riding beside a lake at all. A dreaming idealist! Jesus, on the contrary, noticed the sparrows on the roof (Matt. x. 29) and the flowers in the garden (Matt. vi. 28); yes, and the tailor at his mending (Matt. ix. 16), and the children's naughtiness (Luke vii. 32). And when it came to practical matters He knew how to make the most of little things, quickly constructing a suitable pulpit out of a fishing-boat, or

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on the side of the hill, for the crowding people (Luke v. 3; Matt. v. 1).

The accusation of fanaticism against Jesus breaks down, therefore, completely. But it is said, He was at least a zealot, a gloomy preacher of repentance, making the way unwarrantably narrow and the gate too strait, and that also signifies no healthy mind. But such a view cannot be maintained if we examine the matter closely. On the contrary, on this side, too, Jesus exhibited a thoroughly healthy mind. Let us take a few instances. When His disciples returned after a long journey, His first concern for them was that they should "rest a while" (Mark vi. 31). Far from any super-spirituality, He inserts a petition for daily bread into the daily prayer (Luke xi. 3). It came naturally to Him to remember that the people who had been listening to Him all day must be hungry, and that spiritual nourishment would not help them when their bodies were faint from lack of food (Mark viii. 2). In the same natural way He was never concerned merely with teaching, but always gave help at the same time. It was His rule to teach and heal (Matt. iv. 23).

He never allied Himself with those who talk so superficially of the "value" of evil. He spoke quite simply of need as need and evil as evil, striving valiantly against them both. What was unpleasant He recognized as such, even treating it as a matter for prayer that the flight of His people should not be in the winter (Matt. xxiv. 20). He freely admitted for Himself the necessity of eating and drinking, of rest and sleep (John iv. 6; Mark iv. 38). He even left the road He was following and took a round-about way in order to gather the first figs (Mark xi. 13). He even asked a Samaritan woman for water when He was thirsty (John iv. 7). He never made any of these things a matter of conscience with His disciples. (Their plucking of the ears of corn on the Sabbath, Mark ii. 23.) The truth is, the spiritual life only becomes quite real when it is quite unaffected. Buddha was the unnatural personified. Everything that was natural and human

found a place in Jesus—surely the greatest sign of His healthiness of mind.

There have been few people in history so sure of themselves as Goethe. He knew exactly the fluctuations and strivings of his own spirit. Yet he knew also of profound depths in his soul which he could not fathom, and of which he was afraid. Jesus' soul was flooded with sunlight. What a sure grasp He had of Himself!

Do we ever see in Him the storms of a passion-swept soul? Did anyone ever see Him out of countenance or with His thoughts beyond control? A vast, serene tranquillity lies over Jesus' life, an inimitable assurance. With accusing faces the parents confronted their twelve-year-old Son. Without hesitation or confusion He answered them from the depths of His lucid spirit (Luke ii. 48). Later, when He had grown to be a man, the ceiling of the room where He was preaching was suddenly broken through, and a sick bed swayed down towards Him. Unperturbed, He immediately diagnosed a curious case of nervous disorder (Mark ii. 4 f.). He was awakened out of sleep by loud cries of alarm, but as soon as He opened His eyes He was Himself, master of the situation (Matt. viii. 25 f.). There is much more we could say on this subject, but the result would always be the same, we should always see what the Romans called *MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO*—a healthy mind in a healthy body.

But though we have recognized the healthiness of Jesus' mind, we have not yet seen its beauty, its unique richness. Let us speak of this greater quality in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

JESUS' GIFTS OF SOUL

REMEMBERING Carlyle's words, "Now and always the completeness of a man's victory over Fear will determine how much of a man he is," we begin our description of Jesus' psychical assets by saying, He was indeed a Man. With Jesus, in fact, we have the feeling that it was not necessary for Him to follow Carlyle's suggestion and first conquer fear. His spirit knew no fear. Even from the mouth of His enemies there came the willing testimony, "Thou regardest not the person of men" (Matt. xxii. 16). This "King of the truth" has too strong a sense of truth and reality for His spirit to lack traits of firmness and combativeness.

Let us observe Jesus in some of the situations which bring out His courage. He was sitting at a banquet given by one of the Pharisees. He saw how these powerful representatives of a large and widely diffused religious body—Josephus reckons their number at 6,000—were watching His every movement with baleful eyes. And He took this opportunity of raising the daring question of the sanctity of the Sabbath, giving His own courageous opinion on the subject (Luke xiv. 1-4), although He knew that death was the penalty for Sabbath-breaking (Exod. xxxi. 15). Jesus took up this disputed question even more fearlessly when, in a Jewish synagogue, He expressly commanded the man with the withered hand to stand forth (Mark iii. 3), thus consciously bringing the matter to a head. Did any man ever challenge his enemies more daringly? On the same day He exposed them by His question, "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day or to do evil?" (v. 4). We can well understand the evangelist's remark, "they were filled with madness" (rage) (Luke vi. 11). On another occasion

the Pharisees and Sadducees, the men who, humanly speaking, held His fate in their hands, were standing before Him, and they hypocritically suggested that they might believe in Him if He would show them a sign from heaven. But, curtly and harshly refusing their request, He fearlessly turned His back on them (Mark viii. 11, 13). And when finally they approached Him with the question whether it was right to pay tribute to Caesar, He called them hypocrites before all the people, and then sharply refused to have anything to do with revolution (Matt. xxii. 18, 21), although He knew that by so doing He definitely shattered the hopes the people had set on Him, and the consequences of this for Himself. It showed almost incredible courage to fling in the faces of the high priest and the elders of the people the words, "The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you" (Matt. xxi. 31).

On no occasion was there anything timid about this Man's actions. When He was convinced of a thing He acted accordingly as a matter of course. He never, in fact, considered what effect any action of His would have on people, or how it would be received by men. He lived as His inner consciousness bade Him, it was a matter between His conscience and Himself. Nothing was further from His mind than shrewd or anxious consideration of the opinion of other people. When He entered the house of Zacchaeus He risked any chance of popularity by this one action (Luke xix. 5); and it was a heroic deed to call a tax-gatherer to be one of His disciples (Matt. ix. 9). Only one man, the Baptist, fully recognized at first His nobility and openly took His part. But at the moment when he ranged himself by the side of Jesus, our Lord began in His heart to separate Himself from him. John was thinking of judgement, Jesus of salvation.

When He was invited to a meal at the Pharisee's house He knew very well that He was being watched, but not even consideration for His host made Him take

part in the hand-washing which was considered a religious ceremony of value before a meal (Luke xi. 38). He lived His life as He thought right even though men called Him a glutton (Matt. xi. 19). He spoke as His heart bade Him, uttering the sharpest words, the most forcible upbraidings, the most serious accusations, even about the ruler of His country (Luke xiii. 32), without hesitation or caution. One might say that His was an extremely impulsive nature. Like all great men He was utterly sincere—they have to be so, for how, otherwise, could their significance be effective?

E. M. Arndt once said, "No tyrant can subdue the man who knows how to die." Jesus knew how to die. He knew nothing of that fear of suffering which a Buddha manifested. The courage of His spirit was maintained until the last triumphant cry, "It is finished!" (John xix. 30). Much in the life of men that looks like courage turns out, on closer inspection, to be merely ignorance of danger. Jesus realized His danger and kept it before His eyes, but it never unnerved Him.

Mark's description of Jesus' last ascent to Jerusalem is very moving. It was a complete surprise to His disciples when He took the road to the city of the great king. Courageously He took His place at the head of the company, though He knew the terrible fate that awaited Him. The disciples followed hesitatingly. The pilgrims to the feast were even more afraid. But He was not intimidated by the danger. He would take the last step with indomitable courage (Mark x. 32). The manliness and vigour in all His life-work was clearly emphasized and visibly reinforced by the courageous attack on the hostile authorities during these last days. For there was something aggressive about Jesus, something intense and passionate. He was never content to be taken on sufferance or to be merely left in peace (Matt. xii. 30). He even tried to win to His side the governor of the province who was judging Him (John xviii. 37). John declares that the aim of Christ's life was to destroy the

works of the devil (1 John iii. 8), and He admitted openly that He came to bring a sword for that purpose (Matt. x. 34)—such a Man must have had a nature ready and eager for battle. And so even His words took on something of the nature of an icy spring of water with its wonderful, varying, buoyant beauty. He Himself stood firm and inflexible as steel, and for the first time—perhaps too for the last—made the words about “fearing God and nothing else in the world” seem entirely true.

Jesus knew how to die. He clearly showed Judas that he was unmasked, and by urging him to carry out his plan quickly burned His bridges behind Him (John xiii. 26 f.). Now He was able to speak when others would rather have kept silence (John xviii. 20 f.); but again He courageously held His peace when others would have tried the effect of soft words (John xix. 9). In the midst of the misery of the world, His own great suffering and the breakdown of His work, He showed that inwardly He could prevail against all such tribulation, and when His plans seemed to have miscarried He could cry triumphantly, “It is finished!” Jesus never knew the weary despondency of which we hear in the lives of the great prophets of action, a Moses or an Elijah (1 Kings xix. 4), and of which Jeremiah, the prophetic writer whose variable moods we know best, was so often conscious (Jer. xv. 10; xx. 14 ff., etc.). This spirit of despondency appeared again in the Baptist (Matt. xi. 2 f.), but do we ever see it in Jesus? Did He ever doubt His work for a moment?

This characteristic of robust manliness and steel-tempered will-power, which may be said to be the foundation of Jesus’ psychic personality, is, of course, clearly stamped on the demands He made on His disciples. They sound like battle-cries or the ring of swords. He calls on His followers to “give up father and mother, yea and their own life also, and to cleave to Him” (Luke xiv. 26); to pluck out an eye and cut off a hand

if either should imperil the whole man, the salvation of the soul (Matt. v. 29 f.); confidently to proclaim from the housetops the tidings of the new King, and to have no fear of men who can kill only the body (Matt. x. 27 f.). He urges a man to have no hesitation in declaring his allegiance to Him, though he should thereby forego the burial of his own father (Luke ix. 59 f.). He bids His followers to be fearless when, for Jesus' sake, they are hated of men and when discipleship leads to dissensions in the home (Matt. x. 35). All these are the courageous words of a brave man, hard words, utterly removed from anything soft or effeminate. To-day people are calling out for a manly Christianity. Well, here it is! When the apostle bade the Corinthians, "Quit you like men, be strong!" (1 Cor. xvi. 13), he was imitating the likeness of Jesus.

He was no preacher of moods. He never gave vent to mere pious emotions. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them" (Matt. vii. 24)—that was the goal He set clearly before His followers. His "Lord's Prayer" is an extraordinarily manly one. From the first word to the last it is, indeed, made up of petitions, but there is no whining, nothing craven or imploring about it, such as may be found in the prayers of the prophets of Baal—and not in these alone (1 Kings xviii. 26–29). How courageously this Jesus flung into the world words which, taken by themselves, may be totally misunderstood and which no one can ponder without being concerned about Him who spoke them (e.g. Matt. v. 39; John xviii. 22 f.; Matt. v. 34; Matt. xxvi. 63 f.). He was speaking not to children (1 Cor. xiv. 20), but to men in Christ (Eph. iv. 13).

If we may see the foundation of Jesus' mental personality in His robust manliness and steel-tempered will-power (in all the great figures of history the will has predominated), we must speak, too, at this point of the anger of Jesus. "How beautiful He was in His anger!" cries one of our modern writers enthusiastically, when

describing the cleansing of the Temple. "Who can imagine the expulsion aright without flaming eyes, uplifted voice, and flushed face?" Frenssen adds, "His home was lost to Him. From that day onwards His face bore an expression of hot, belligerent anger." No less a person than E. M. Arndt admits, "I am a lover of anger and hatred when they arise out of a feeling of justice and truth."

What can we say about the anger of Jesus? One thing is certain, His soul was full of strong currents capable of profound animation. Bousset may be right when he says, "It rises volcano-like from the depths of the soul." If the wind of self-seeking had blown through it, this soul might have become a raging sea. But all these currents were only the strong motive power, moving the stupendous pendulum of His immeasurable love. This is the only viewpoint from which we can judge the anger of Jesus. We see in it no irritation or annoyance. This righteous wrath is lacking in that which makes our own anger sinful. We are zealous in what concerns ourselves, He is eaten up with zeal for His God. Our passions blaze up because of some wrong done to us. It is wrong done to His Father that makes Him glow with anger. Sin alone enflames His wrath. Hypocrisy and impenitence can raise in Him a perfect storm of anger. But when this happens He is only placing Himself by the side of God whose wrath we know is "burning" (Isa. xxx. 27), for "He loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7). Old Arndt may indeed be right when he says, "I am a lover of anger."

In the face of so many insipid, soft, feeble, sentimental portraits of Jesus, which the artists through the centuries have painted for us, we have earnestly desired to bring out all the strength of His personality. He was indeed a Man, if ever there was one. But now we must turn our eyes to quite a new beauty in this spirit, to characteristics which are wholly unexpected after what we have just been studying.

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This steel-hard Jesus was also a Man of tenderness, bearing in His breast a heart of quite unusual sensitiveness. When He went to raise Lazarus from the dead, He wept as He thought of the dead man (John xi. 35). He could not look on the city destined for destruction without tears starting to His eyes (Luke xix. 41). He was moved with heartfelt pity when He saw the widow wearily following the coffin of her only son (Luke vii. 13); or when He realized that the crowds that had followed Him into the wilderness were without food (Matt. xv. 32). In the midst of hard words of denunciation which flashed like lightning, distress would seize Him when He thought of the woman who might be with child in those days, or nursing a babe at her breast (Matt. xxiv. 19). What deep, compassionate consideration made Him forbid His disciples change their place of abode in case their hosts should be hurt! (Mark vi. 10). (Perhaps if they found the house were lacking in what they required.) Or when He thanked God that He had lost none except "the child of perdition" (John xvii. 12). With what a tender and kindly light His eyes must have shone when children whom He did not know came so willingly to receive His caresses (Mark x. 16), or without a trace of shyness allowed Him to place them in a circle of twelve strange men! (Matt. xviii. 2).

If Jesus had a deep, tender, almost womanly feeling for others, He experienced the same emotion with regard to His own person and fate. His words sound like some moving lament. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20). We are almost reminded of a woman's nature when He is afraid of being left alone, and feelingly begs His disciples, "Tarry ye here, and watch with Me" (Matt. xxvi. 38). We never find Him suppressing the emotional life, there is never any trace of stoical indifference. He was so certain that after three days He would rise again, yet that did not hinder His tender, sensitive spirit from having to fight long and

bitterly against the natural human dread of death (Luke xii. 50 f.; John xii. 27).

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We have already touched on the kindness of Jesus, which was no acquired virtue but one of His natural assets. This kindness was a marked characteristic of His, colouring His whole life. It was at a wedding that He first manifested Himself as the great bringer of joy and blessing in the time of salvation (John ii. 11). Among sick, miserable folk He maintained His sunny temper, a quiet cheerfulness and gladsomeness. There was something very attractive to people in the way He gave of Himself, so much so that a woman, moved partly by carnal and partly by spiritual love, cried out in ecstasy, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee" (Luke xi. 27). Sullen people have no power of attraction. Even a Judas was for years unable to free himself from the influence of Jesus.

Jesus' message, too, was distinctly coloured by His kindness. The tidings He declared were just as serious as the Baptist's—were they not concerned with the sovereignty of God? But how much more kindly is Jesus' method of delivering the message! How glowingly He depicts it—as a marriage feast, a great supper, a hidden treasure, a pearl of great price! (Matt. xxii. 2; Luke xiv. 16; Matt. xiii. 44, 45). Martyrdom awaited them both, with this difference, that one knew beforehand what was to happen, while the other did not. The latter, on the contrary, already saw from afar the splendour of the coronation, and by the same token a place of honour for himself as herald, near the throne. Yet though he foresaw dawning glory for himself, his preaching was gloomy. The other, who from the beginning saw the Cross standing at the end of His path (John ii. 19; iii. 14, cf. my *Death of Jesus*, Part I), spoke as though His heart were filled with jubilation, and in tones so kindly

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that they were like those of a mother-bird gathering her young (Luke xiii. 34).

Yet there was no jesting in Jesus' kindliness—not even with the children. He caressed them, then simply blessed them before letting them go (Mark x. 16). He did not see anything droll about them. It is not difficult to find both wit and humour in the sayings of the Old Testament. We know that Socrates jested even in his last hours. Many earnest Christians do not repress this gift of humour—one of nature's noblest gifts because it is the form of pleasantry most allied to love—for they are conscious that they often have in it a fountain of refreshment for themselves and others in this vale of woe. Fun and humour found no place in Jesus' life, because the strain induced by the sin of the world was too great. He lacked that smiling ease without which humour is impossible. Did He ever actually laugh?

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The spirit of Jesus was in the highest degree receptive. How sympathetic He was, how profoundly He felt for others! Was ever a soul so wrung with sympathy as His? He could be so entirely taken up with the duties of the moment that the world around Him faded; food and drink were forgotten (Mark iii. 20; John iv. 31). Hypocrisy, hardness of heart, malevolence, could make Him "sigh deeply in spirit" before all the people (Mark viii. 12). His spirit could flame in moral indignation (Matt. xii. 34; xxiii. 13 ff.). It had nothing of the even calm of a Buddha who has neither desires nor passions, nor yet love. And so there is something refreshing about Jesus. There were inexhaustible depths in His heart, the riches of His nature were immeasurable. He could rejoice (Luke x. 21), and He could mourn (Mark xv. 34) with a zest and a sympathy that few have ever experienced.

Again, there was nothing restless about this nature, so sensitive to every impression. We never see Jesus hurried or ruffled. He was well aware that "the harvest

is plenteous" (Matt. ix. 37), that "the night cometh" (John ix. 4), and, too, He was impelled by the deepest pity (Matt. xx. 34; xxiii. 13 ff.). These two factors might well have induced a great disquiet, a feeling that continual haste was necessary. But do we ever see Him otherwise than calm and collected? Jesus lived in an age of unrest whose over-ripe civilizations were nearing their fall. He had the finest perception of what the age called "whited sepulchres" (Matt. xxiii. 27). He sensed the breath of decay and spoke about "the eagles gathering together" (Matt. xxiv. 28). Yet who ever saw Him hurried or agitated? Did He sample all sorts of remedies and quack medicines to cure this sick world? He saw that the world needed to be saved and yet He preserved a truly "God-like" calm. He could sit for hours with a Mary at His feet (Luke x. 39), or even with a child on His knee, nestling against His breast (Mark x. 16). It may seem as though we were drawing attention to something very trivial when we point out that Jesus always sat when He taught the people. But even this is significant, for it accords with His tranquil, lucid manner. Ed. von Gebhardt is quite wrong when he paints the Saviour standing, during the Sermon on the Mount. The fact that Jesus sat should have reminded the artist that the Master of Nazareth should never have been depicted in such active movement when He preached.

If we wish to represent Jesus' psychical equipment aright, there is one thing above all which we must lay our finger on: we see in this soul an extraordinary clash of contrasts. This Jesus is frank and communicative; He laments His need; does not hide His fear, and gives vivid expression to His joy; there is nothing taciturn or reserved about Him. And then again, He is the recluse, the Man who walks alone, watching the long night through by Himself; He can possess the best and keep it in His own breast, saying to His disciples even at the end, "I

have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12). This Jesus is so singularly lucid and serene, so curiously collected and master of Himself; and then again He is so moved that it looks as though His reserve were broken through, as though His inward balance were disturbed. He is mild, and yet so intensely in earnest; His character is heroic, and yet full of tenderness. All His words are wonderfully profound, and at the same time so transparently clear. His business is the conquest of the world, and yet He can talk to an ordinary common woman so searchingly that one might almost think the salvation of her soul was His only concern (John iv. 27; cf. v. 17). He keeps His great task always before Him, and yet can give His whole attention to little things. Subjectivity and objectivity become one in Him; tranquil serenity is side by side with restless activity. He is both an optimist and a pessimist; the world is plunged in wickedness, but He has overcome the world. His vision is wide, but He is content with the eleven whom He has won for Himself. He is far above the judgement of His race, yet limits His activities to His own nation (Matt. xv. 24). Nationalists may rightly claim Him as their own, and the internationalism with the greatest prospect of success is based on Him. He never forgets His dignity, yet He keeps company with harlots (Luke vii. 37 ff.). He is a man of the people, and so approachable that He immediately answers the cry of the leper (Luke xvii. 12 ff.), goes to the help of the beggar (Matt. xx. 29), and talks with the gossiping woman at the well (John iv. 9 ff.). And He is so reserved that He maintains a cold silence when a king seeks to converse with Him (Luke xxiii. 9). No one is so simple as He, or so profoundly wise. No one ever had so deep a sense of reality, yet this does not hinder Him from displaying unbounded enthusiasm. How virile his nature is, yet He spends a great part of His life by the side of sick beds. Willingly we place Him among the great thinkers of history, and yet again He is not totally

immersed in meditation and reflection, but a Man of action, able to sway multitudes. He calls no woman His own, yet He is the first to give woman her rightful place (Matt. v. 32). His anger can flame so hotly that He uses a scourge; and yet again He silently endures the greatest outrage towards Himself. He presses forward impetuously like a man, and His patience and endurance are those of a woman. He can make demands so severe that His disciples blench before them, and He mildly exonerates a woman whom all condemn (John viii. 10 f.). He speaks daringly of a time to come when God shall not be worshipped on Moriah or on Gerizim (John iv. 21), and yet He is so conservative that He will preserve the last letter of the law (Matt. v. 18). His is a nature that can act and labour as Buddha never did, but He can suffer and endure as well—yes, even better than he. He puts forward the most tremendous claims (Matt. x. 37), yet He never resents insult. He combines the harmlessness of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent; He sets out to win the world, and yet He can disdain it. His is the most sympathetic personality (the most ready to enter into the feelings of others) and at the same time the most autopathic (the most withdrawn into itself). Individualists and socialists may both count Him as one of themselves. This Man rests in God and at the same time labours for God. He is better than us all, but He is without pride. His life is stainless, and He mixes with those who have a mark on their foreheads (Matt. xi. 19). Sin, He says, is above all else to be avoided, yet He is never afraid of mingling with sinners. Innocently He enjoys the world, yet it never takes Him captive. He can sit at a wedding feast and be the guest at a banquet, but He feels Himself no stranger among the penitents in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 1 f.). His love is given to the poor and needy, but the man of high standing finds the way to His heart (Mark x. 21). There is something majestic and commanding about His person, yet the fearful and the easily intimidated are quickly won by

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it. He draws men wonderfully to Himself, and is yet so alien to them that even His disciples cannot understand Him. No mystic had ever such power of concentration as He, and at the same time He goes about the world with His eyes open, noticing even the children playing in the market-place (Matt. xi. 16). His heart glows with love, but He is free of the extravagant enthusiasm of the Early Church whose members sold their possessions and goods (Acts ii. 45). Jesus does not reprove His friends in Bethany for enjoying their home. In His spirit we see activity and receptivity, modesty and self-esteem wonderfully contrasted. This Man is convinced that the world will be perfected through His presence and His working, and yet He remains meek and lowly in heart (Matt. xi. 29). "With the dignity of those of a royal race, yet simple as any peasant." That is the peculiarity of Jesus' spirit, that it can experience the whole gamut of feelings, emotions, and perceptions, which the ordinary man can know only in part.

It is useless to seek for any particular temperament in Jesus. We shall never succeed in labelling His spiritual gifts as we are accustomed to do with others. Remembering the cleansing of the Temple, men have dubbed Him choleric. And He could just as easily be termed phlegmatic when we think how He slept during the storm and held His peace before His judges. He is said to be sanguine, He allows the crowd to render Him jubilant homage; and immediately afterwards we find Him weeping (Luke xix. 37 ff., 41). We might just as well think of Him as an incorrigible melancholic because Mary's ointment makes Him think of His burial (John xii. 7), or because He utters His parables only that they shall not be understood by the people (Mark iv. 11 f.). No, such current definitions of natural dispositions do not suffice here.

It is curious, too, how we lose sight of the fact that

He belonged to any particular race. He is a Jew—the Samaritan woman immediately recognized Him as such (John iv. 9)—and yet, fundamentally, there is so little that is Jewish about Him that we Christians often find Jewish characteristics unbearable. In the wealth and picturesqueness of His language He is an Oriental, and an Occidental in the logical precision of His thought. “Haste is of the devil,” says the Arab, and at heart every Oriental agrees with him. Many a traveller has come away from the Holy Land with the impression that under such a sun and such a sky, dreaming and musing are of more account than watching and working. But the busy European with his “career”—a cause of such astonishment to the Indian with his “existence”—can comprehend Jesus, who has taught even the captains of industry what work means. With His clear, serene, wise view of life He was a pattern to the ancient Germans, and yet His passionate struggle for truth and goodness made Him an example too for the Romans. The deep thoughtfulness of the German and the energy of the Roman find in Him the same satisfaction. For all these extraordinarily contrasting traits of character are found united, for once, in Him.

They really are *united* in Him. For these contradictory traits do not produce the effect of contrast in His nature. Karl von Hase is right in saying that “a sharply pronounced character [which is, we may add, one-sided and limited] is not the ideal of mankind, but rather a beautiful symmetry of all the faculties.” Jesus must certainly be placed in the ranks of the vivid, ardent people, yet these qualities are entirely balanced and clarified. As often as any violent emotion, any perturbation of spirit, any particular mood is to be seen in Jesus, the opposite qualities are already there, hidden but near at hand, ready to hold the balance. His mind is like a perfect musical instrument, as soon as one string is touched the others vibrate with it. So there is a wealth of contrasts, all harmonizing and united in His per-

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sonality. From the time of our Lord to the days of Tolstoi prejudice after prejudice has found its issue in Him, but in Jesus Himself all the contrasts and contradictions are raised into perfect harmony. And in this Man inward contradictions never betrayed themselves in biting wit.

Did Jesus' psychic characteristics alter at all during His lifetime? Did He gradually become more gloomy, more bitter, or change in any such way? Anyone who asserts such a thing is allowing his own ideas to influence his conception of Jesus, because he desires to make Christ's life dramatic. In reality a silent growth was the only change. Everything about Him bore the mark not of contradiction and struggle, but of a lovely directness, and a lofty, natural compulsion, which has always been the surest sign of the really "beautiful" spirit.

We have said enough about Jesus' spirit. What about the mental gifts of this Man?

CHAPTER III

THE NATURAL MENTAL GIFTS OF JESUS

TREITSCHKE, that admirable scholar of world-history, said once of Frederick the Great, "Finally, he received from fate that favour which even genius requires if it is to leave the impress of its spirit on the age—the good fortune of living out his life to a ripe old age." Goethe, too, experienced this good fortune.¹ Jesus was denied this; and yet He left His imprint not only on an epoch but on a whole world.

Do we know of any other founder of religion or philosophy who was able to create so important a school as Jesus in so short a time? His disciples were animated by a single spirit; and He brought about this transformation in men who had been nothing but fishermen, or their like.

Mohammed had twenty-two years in which to labour, Buddha as long as forty-five years. Jesus was little longer than two years at work, dying soon after His thirtieth year (Luke iii. 23). Yet the short life-work of this Man has diffused through the centuries influences so stupendous that, even humanly speaking, no other man can be put in the same category with Him. No one in history has had anything even faintly approaching such influence.

To our regret we have only one incident recorded of the youth of Jesus, that of the twelve-year-old Child. And here we see no infant prodigy such as rightly arouses our suspicion. Yet the doctors in the Temple were amazed at the understanding shown by the questions of this Child, and by the answers which He gave to their questions (Luke ii. 46 f.). They were stimulated into conversation with Him, for He displayed a wisdom very unnatural in one of such tender years (Luke ii. 40).

¹ Kant was sixty years old when he wrote his greatest works.

Thus in the twelve-year-old Child we see already foreshadowed the mental gifts which were to grace the Man.

It is not easy to give even an idea of the richness of this mind. Let us begin with the extraordinary acuteness and alertness by which it was characterized. Jesus had thousands of opportunities to demonstrate these brilliantly in the endless disputes with His opponents.

It was an age in which the subtleties of the law were discussed without end in the schools of learning. His opponents felt they were sure of success when they posed Him with such questions. Surely the unschooled carpenter's son would be put to confusion before all the people. First they came to Him with the old dispute as to the characteristics of the greater and lesser commandments (Matt. xxii. 36). But with inimitable acumen Jesus pointed to the commandment which the law itself clearly defines as the greatest (Deut. vi. 6-9), and ranked beside this a second, which to the sane mind obviously proves itself without question to be in its way the source of endless commandments and precepts (Matt. xxii. 39). As He was known to be a friend of publicans and sinners, they dragged the adulteress before Him, asking, "How will you and your love for sinners reconcile this with the law of Moses? He commanded that she should be stoned" (John viii. 5). Would Jesus be confused? Would His love for sinners make Him decide against Moses? They hoped so, for then at last the law could prosecute Him. But, like a clever chess player, Jesus played Moses against Moses. For it was also Moses who commanded, "The hands of the witnesses shall be the first to put her to death" (Deut. xvii. 7). With ready wit and deep meaning Jesus turned the phrase round: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then they all turned and went out, leaving the woman alone with Jesus. On another occasion, remembering how He had once forbidden divorce (Matt. v. 32), His opponents confronted

Him with the direct question whether He would set up His view against the law of Moses. Again with incomparable dexterity He quoted the law against Moses, explaining the second phrase of the command as simply a precept against the hardness of men's hearts (Mark x. 2-9). "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar?" asked the Pharisees. Quick as lightning Jesus saw the difficulties of the question. If He answered No, He would be called an agitator, if Yes, they would say He belittled God's sovereignty over Israel. But without hesitation He gave the apt reply, avoiding the trap set for Him and forcing His opponents themselves to confirm His answer (Matt. xxii. 15 f.). When the Sadducees, who took Moses as their only authority, attempted to cast ridicule on the hopes of a resurrection, Jesus again quoted Moses against them, proving so acutely and convincingly the certainty of resurrection in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that even some of His opponents exclaimed in amazement, "Master, Thou hast well said" (Luke xx. 39). Again and again they tried to trap Him with new questions, but always in vain.

But how well He knew, on His part, how to question them! There was no way of escape from His questions. The answer had to be Yes or No, there was no other alternative. By the reply they gave they were either ranged on His side or had to expose the hardness of their hearts in opposing Him. "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil? To save life or to kill?" (Mark iii. 4). "The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or of men?" (Matt. xxi. 25). Then there was His expulsion of devils. Either He drove them out by the aid of Satan, as His enemies asserted, or, if that was ridiculous as He could prove, the hand of God must be admitted in the miracle. A third explanation was impossible (Luke xi. 18, 20). In fact, His questions confounded and annihilated His enemies, culminating in the master-word about the Messiah:

"If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?" (Matt. xxii. 45).

There was something so bewilderingly simple about His answers. Common sense had to admit their truth. After all, everyone must admit that "they that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick" (Luke v. 31). One's own child could not be left lying in an empty well, even on the Sabbath day; even an ox must be rescued (Luke xiv. 5). This was so obvious to men of ordinary sense that His opponents did not dare to quibble about it (cf. also, John vii. 23). How well His shafts found their mark! We can almost pity His opponents.

At the same time, it was never Jesus who created these situations. They were almost always forced upon Him, and He had no time to prepare for them in advance. The situation altered so quickly, too, that He had constantly to change His position of defence or attack. But He was never surprised by the unexpected (cf. Matt. ix. 1 ff., with its continual changes); He never required time for consideration, and He showed complete assurance. For He knew that He could control the situation from within. This feeling of power—apart from other reasons—made Him disdain stratagem or artifice.¹ There was no cunning about His wisdom, He was entirely frank and sincere. Very few men in history who have desired to attain greatness have dared to be so. Yet how often He "silenced" His opponents! Finally they realized that in a battle of words He was invincible, and they no longer dared to dispute with Him (Matt. xxii. 46; Mark xii. 34; Luke xx. 40). He won this victory too without any regular education or training (John vii. 15;

¹ Irony is also unthinkable in connection with Jesus, for His feeling of power made it unnecessary. Those who believe they can find it in His utterances are putting their own meaning into His words. One is reminded of Max Grube's impression of the Emperor, William II (*Am Hofe der Kunst*). "I do not believe the Kaiser has any leaning towards irony. After all, the great ones of the world may give full expression to their views and therefore have no need of it." In this respect Jesus greatly resembles the great.

Mark vi. 2). The Pharisees indeed possessed not a little learning and knowledge of the truth, but it was as nothing to the wealth of Jesus' mental equipment. How deep and true this must have been is shown by the light it sheds on the learning of the Pharisees. Yet, do we ever hear of Him studying? He produced these treasures of thought without effort out of His own store of creative power. He was in fact a Man of exceptional ability.

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As a public speaker too Jesus is unapproachable. People were carried away by His words. Even the officers sent by the high priest to arrest Him were overcome when they heard Him speak and turned back with their task undone, saying, "Never man spake like this Man" (John vii. 46). It happened sometimes that thousands of people crowded to hear Him, so that "they trode one upon another" (Luke xii. 1). Thousands stayed with Him for days in the desert, so fascinated by His words that they forgot hunger and thirst (Mark viii. 2). At another time the people declared that the oratory of the scribes, the recognized leaders of the people, was not to be compared with His (Matt. vii. 29). So they sat in dense, crowds round about Him, or camped on the shore while He sat in a boat (Mark iii. 31; iv. 1).

It would be entirely wrong to suppose that the Galileans among whom Jesus spent a great part of His active life were a people of little importance. Galilee was not "country" in the sense that some sentimental people would have us believe. It was a corridor through which all the important trade had to pass, full of merchants, small traders, officials of all sorts, and soldiers. It had the important advantage of Greek culture, being a bi-lingual country in which nearly everyone was forced by circumstances to learn Greek. Moving about in cities, towns, and villages, Jesus practised His speaking in the rigorous form of the synagogue sermon, which was based on the

Scriptures, and in spontaneous, popular addresses in the streets, by the lake, or on the mountain-side; the success was always the same, the people were fascinated by His speaking.

We know of gifted orators who achieve popularity by a happy mixture of seriousness and humour. Jesus entirely disdained such methods. He assailed the hearts of His hearers with much that was harsh, severe, and trenchant, and yet how gladly they listened to Him! (Mark xii. 37). How eloquent He must have been!

The written word never gives anything but a feeble picture of the effectiveness of the spoken word. But even from the reports we have of His preaching we can feel that there was no monotony in His speaking (such as with Mohammed and Buddha); how He suited it to His audience, how He had the wonderful gift of interesting the more intellectual and yet making Himself understood by the common people. His speech could take on every tone—the quiet tone of persuasion and instruction, the soft tone of gentle consolation and comfort, the beguiling tone of the tender-hearted, calling all men to Himself. Then again His words rushed forth in flood, with all the power of the Old Testament prophets; His voice rang as He called men to action, or flamed in blazing anger. What a master of oratory this Jesus was! What variety He commanded, from the devastating attacks on His opponents (Matt. xxiii. 13 ff.) to the heart-wringing lament over Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. xxiii. 37). He could adapt His gift either for teaching His disciples or for public oratory (Matt. v; xiii). There was in His speaking the simple greatness which wins the heart of the common man (Luke xi. 27). Yet this did not degrade His gift to a mere religion of the proletariat, though its simplicity made it effective.

Because it was directed towards the ultimate religious needs of simple humanity, it had in it something for everyone, giving all classes and nations their due. The truly popular is also the truly human. "The field of humanity is ever refreshed from the depths below" (W. Raabe).

There are still two points to be mentioned. In His distinguished performance as a public speaker, we never see any sign of preparation in Jesus' addresses. From the very first, when He made His overwhelming appearance in His native town, His speaking was *extempore*. The servant handed Him the prescribed roll of the law and, opening it, He at once began to speak on the passage that lay before Him (Luke iv. 17). And as there is no trace of preparation beforehand, neither are we aware of any attempt to work up to a climax, to develop the theme gradually, or to insert what we call padding. From first to last His addresses were a finished product. Who can be surprised that His fellow-countrymen "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth"? (Luke iv. 22). To us His mind appears to be one of quite unusual brilliance.

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Along with His power of popular oratory and teaching we must place a third gift, that of private conversation with individuals. What a master Jesus was in this field! There is no beating about the bush in His conversation with the woman at the well (John iv), with Nicodemus, who came to Him by night (John iii), with the rich young man who accosted Him on the street (Mark x. 17). He took people as He found them. He knew how to take the last subject as a starting-point and with a quick turn to direct His listener's thoughts to the greatest subject of all (John iv. 7 ff.). With a few words He riveted their attention so that they forgot the world around them, aware only of the speaker. He is always the giver, whether He is the guest of the publican or

of people of standing (Luke v. 29; xv. 1 ff.; vii. 36). He always directs the conversation. Nicodemus, a man of sense and reason, was utterly confounded by the complete alteration in his own point of view, and had to yield blindly to His guidance (John iii. 3 ff.). Quietly and dexterously Jesus understood how to turn His questioner's peculiarity of thought to account (Mark x. 19: Because a rich man is speaking, He quotes the ninth and tenth commandments, Defraud not; cf. Deut. xxiv. 14).

This master of words was also a poet—indeed one of the greatest poets. He handled the ancient art of proverb-making with consummate skill. We are told of King Solomon that “he spake three thousand proverbs . . . and he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes” (1 Kings iv. 32, 33). Jesus did the same thing. Without mentioning any other subjects, I will set down here a list of the animals which are so ingeniously made use of in His parables: camel, wolf, fox, serpent, dog, ox, ass, sheep, calf, pig, fish, eagle, cock, hen, chicken, dove, sparrow, fly, scorpion. Those who are acquainted with Jesus' words will remember all of these. He could round almost every thought into a proverb, and each time it was complete in itself, a little cameo standing alone. This pleasant yet forcible form made Jesus' words acceptable to His audience; it was easily remembered, each saying being a little gem which afterwards sparkled in various colours, for in different connections fresh light was constantly shed on it; each time it was shown to be a treasure.

In order to observe the art in these sayings think of Matt. vii. 2, where the Hebrew parallelism is apparent (“With what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again”); or Luke xiv. 11, where a contrast is

used ("Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"); or Matt. x. 40, where the idea is again followed out in the parallel form ("He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me"). The sayings are also enlivened by a play on words—thus in Matt. x. 39, where the same word is used in different senses, or Matt. x. 32, where different aspects of a thought are brought into relation through the similarity of expression. Other sayings are arresting because they give an impression of one-sidedness (Matt. vii. 7), of the marvellous (John ix. 39), of exaggeration (Matt. xii. 30), or even of contradiction (John v. 31; cf. with viii. 14), thus purposely emphasizing only one side of the idea.

A true son of the Orient, Jesus constantly puts His sayings in the form of metaphor. These are often surprising, indeed often they cannot be realized in sober reality. (A camel going through the eye of a needle, stones crying out, mountains removed: Matt. vii. 3; xvii. 20; xix. 24; xxiii. 24; Luke xix. 40.) He always goes to the farthest limits in vividly illustrating everyday truth, speaking not of strife or discord, but of the sword that kills, of the hairs of our heads being numbered, of the Gospel being proclaimed from the housetops (Matt. x. 34, 30, 27). In all His highly descriptive and arresting discourses the skill and art of the poet are revealed.

Speaking of Jesus as a poet we at once think of His parables. If only one of these had come down to us, that of the Prodigal Son, it would suffice to ensure His carrying off the palm in this domain too. But a great number of His parables have been preserved to us as a priceless treasure.

We are sometimes reminded that it was a favourite custom of the prophets to make use of some occurrence in nature or in daily life to illustrate an idea which they

desired to impress on the people, but it is difficult to point to any particular instance of this. There is the well-known parable of Nathan the prophet about the poor man's one ewe lamb (2 Sam. xii. 1), and that in Isaiah about God's vineyard (Isa. v. 1 ff.); but that is really all. What are these two solitary examples in comparison with Jesus' wealth of illustration?

Did Jesus then take the parable from the scribes, with whom it was much in vogue? This does not diminish our admiration for His skill in the use of it. Because, by comparing His parables with similar essays of the rabbis, we become aware of His supreme mastery. Where they only stammered He spoke. It is interesting to note that the synagogue hardly made any use of nature or the workings of nature.

It has been said that "the greatest thing a human soul can do in this world is to see a thing and tell in simple form what it has seen." Jesus possessed both these gifts in a superlative degree. First of all He could see. He saw what was typical and significant in things. He had that acuteness of vision which sees things clearly as they are—that hall-mark of the true artist. No one before or since has possessed this intuitive sense of reality in a greater degree.

This being so, it cannot surprise us that Jesus was far in advance of His time in making use of the most modern realism in His parables, in an age when all poetry still wore the buskins. He could and did give an unvarnished description of a prodigal son wasting his inheritance among harlots (Luke xv. 13); of a deceitful overseer, too lazy to work and too respectable to beg (Luke xvi. 3); of a man getting his petition through by sheer impudence (Luke xi. 8). He knew, and described without embarrassment, how in the Orient the unemployed labourers sometimes hang round, listening to a story-teller or sleeping in the grass (Matt. xx. 3); how a judge unjustly turns a deaf ear to a widow's plea because she has nothing with which to reward him (Luke xviii. 2 ff.); how a

master, with terrible cruelty, allows his slave to be hacked to pieces (Matt. xxiv. 51). Here, in fact, long in advance of its time, we have the naturalism and realism so common in the writing of our own day.

Jesus could see. He noticed the simplest incidents of the life in the street. He could tell of the new scraps of cloth with which the tailor patched an old garment (Matt. ix. 16); of the fouled net which the fishers drew out of the lake (Matt. xiii. 47); of the bride's attendants who slept at the door of the house (Matt. xxv. 5); of the good man who stayed too long at a wedding and returned in the small hours (Luke xii. 38). But while He describes all these everyday incidents Jesus is never commonplace, never ordinary, as Buddha so often is. Rather He shows what dignity there is in common duties, and how capable of nobility they may become.

But there is the second gift, too: He knew how to describe what He had seen. Who does not know the parable of the good Samaritan? Of what does it consist? Just a few bold strokes, and there is conjured up before us a familiar landscape with a few everyday figures in it. But this is the skill of the real artist—the greatest simplicity is the highest art.

There are single parables which taken by themselves are real masterpieces. Think of that of the prodigal son. Where have we a better description of a father's heart? What writer ever depicted paternal generosity so movingly in so few strokes? There is not a word too many or too few. Nothing is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." There is no striving after an aesthetic ideal either here or in any of the other parables. The execution is the most artless possible. And yet a tranquil beauty pervades the parable and all those which take their likeness from the simple incidents of natural surroundings. There is in all of them a breath of the most delicate, sensitive poetry. There is nothing artificial about them, nothing exaggerated, nothing exuberant, such as the Orient loves. "Noble simplicity and serene grandeur," says

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Winkelman, describing classical art, and the phrase might well be applied to those masterpieces of Jesus.

There is one more thing we must call to mind in order to appreciate this faculty of Jesus aright. Describing one of the kings of England, who seemed to be a sort of wonder of his time, Shakespeare once wrote,

We
Never noted in him any shades,
Any retirement, any sequestration
From open haunts and popularity,

and this might well be said of Jesus. One of His most beautiful parables was given as though on the spur of the moment in answer to an interruption made by one of the scribes (Luke x. 29). But He never pondered long over His parables, working at them or refining them; they are entirely spontaneous, coming easily and naturally from the depths of His heart. He knew nothing of the piecing together of acquired dogma and fable, that patchwork of Mohammed's, or of the speculative reasoning of Buddha.

If Jesus deserves a place among the poets, though He never claimed it, we must certainly place Him among the great thinkers of the world. What was the ultimate reason for the particular form He gave to many of the parables? Was it not that He was the first to perceive the natural law in the spiritual world? These parables are not simply picturesque additions to His thought, no mere illustrations. No, they are meant to disclose the true reason why things happen as they do in the Kingdom of God. Jesus was the first to be conscious that the law that works in the world of nature holds good in the spiritual world also: what cannot be done in the one is equally impossible in the other. In these parables He describes—and His descriptions are supremely true to nature (read, for instance, Matt. xiii. 3 ff.)—something

which the law of nature demands. He depicts fundamental laws which repeat themselves in the higher plane of the Kingdom of God. These natural occurrences teach us to perceive how, in the spiritual realm, the same natural law operates. In both worlds the seed is hindered by the idiosyncracies of the soil; but this dependence on the idiosyncracies of the heart shows clearly that only a purely spiritual activity is possible in the Kingdom of God (Matt. xiii. 3). It is a law of nature that the multiplication of life can only be achieved through the death of the grain of corn, and this makes it clear to us that the death of our Lord was unavoidable (John xii. 24). Jesus was the first to point out the great natural law of creation and decay, now so familiar to us of a later age, by which the death of one creature means the beginning of life to another. It is a natural law that grapes loosened from the vine-stock must fade and wither; and thus we can realize what the fate of His disciples must be when separated from Him, the true vine (John xv. 6). The growth of the seed is natural: "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark. iv. 26 ff.). And it at once becomes clear that in the Kingdom of God perfection cannot be attained at a single stroke. But is this not just the modern idea of development? It is a natural law that the mustard seed should grow and become greater than all herbs in spite of its tiny beginning; so proof is hardly needed that the extreme smallness of the beginnings of the Kingdom of God does not entail any meagre greatness when it shall have attained its full growth (Mark iv. 31). In this respect, too, how far Jesus had advanced beyond the knowledge and thought of His time!

Goethe once said: "It is the finest sign of originality to develop accepted ideas so richly that men are astounded to see how much lay hidden within them." What infinitely great and potent thoughts of the hope of immortality Jesus evolved from the current, worn-out phrase, "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"! (Matt. xxii. 32).

HIS NATURAL MENTAL GIFTS

It may be true that all that was required was a deeper view in the application of the moral principles inherent in the commandments of Moses, but how well Jesus understood this deepening process! We see an example of it in His handling of the sixth commandment: "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. v. 28).

We are often told that single phrases of the Lord's Prayer were known before Jesus uttered them, and that parallels to nearly all the petitions can easily be found elsewhere. The parts may indeed be found elsewhere, but only He could give us the whole, bound with the spiritual bond of prayer. In His hands it has become something so peculiar, so potent, so original!

Or let us take something else, perhaps the greatest thing He did, the setting forth of the two greatest commandments. Emphasis on the divine command to love God as the first of all the commandments followed naturally from the preferential position given to it even in the Mosaic law (Deut. vi. 6-9). But who guided the hand of Jesus when He drew from some out-of-the-way place, some forgotten corner (Lev. xix. 18*b*), a second commandment bearing no sign of greatness, and placed it beside the recognized "first," declaring it to be "like unto it"? (Matt. xxii. 39). Certainly both commandments had been there for a very long time, one dealing with love to God, the other with love to our neighbour. But it was Jesus who connected them together, declaring that they summed up the whole law with its many hundreds of precepts, and with this single thought He all at once unlocked a vast and entirely new moral code, beyond which no one can advance, and which checks for ever any separation of the two moral precepts: "Love, and do what you will."

* * * * *

There is a great comprehensiveness in the mind of

Jesus. Nearly every science may count Him among its notabilities. The psychologist must look up to Him with respect, for there has never been a man who knew men as He did, no one ever estimated human nature so justly, or could read the human soul so easily and unerringly. We have only to think of the masterly description of the human heart in the parable of the different kinds of ground (Matt. xiii. 3 ff., 19 ff.); or of the insight into the human soul shown in the incident of the widow's mite (Mark xii. 41). For the first time, too, men's eyes were opened to the nature of the child. Up till then children had been considered as playthings—or sometimes worse (1 Cor. vi. 9).

But not only the psychologist, the pedagogist, too, may learn from Jesus. He can learn from Him how to impart instruction by the use of illustration (Matt. xviii. 2; xxii. 19 f.); how to take a subject near at hand and relate it to one further off (John iv. 7, 10); how attention can be aroused by a little dexterity (John viii. 6); and how to make the questioner answer his own questions (Luke x. 29, 36). He can learn how to withhold from the beginner too much that is new and strange, and how he can be led to find out a great deal for himself. I refer here particularly to Jesus' reserve in testifying of Himself. In the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer—at least in the form given us by Matthew—Jesus shows us a pedagogical master-stroke without parallel (Matt. vi. 12 (R.V.), according to the best MSS.). He teaches us to pray, Forgive us our debts as we *have* forgiven our debtors. He wants no cheap pledge that can be easily and quickly forgotten. The children of God must be compelled to settle up with their debtors before they can seek pardon from their Father.

Not only the psychologist and the pedagogue, but the naturalist too, can learn from Jesus and be grateful to Him. What an eye He had for the beauties of nature! A sentence such as "Consider the lilies. . . . Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Matt.

vi. 29) shows us how far ahead of His time He was in this respect. There are no words in the whole world of antiquity so full of an appreciation of nature as these. Had Jesus ever examined a piece of silken tissue and the petal of a flower lying together under a magnifying glass, that He knew the supreme fineness in every line of the latter? The naturalist has reason for gratitude too because He is the only one among all the founders of religion who laid no bonds on a knowledge of nature by confusing a consideration of the universe with religion. Jesus, with His liberal spirit, was the first to allow free play to all research and investigation.

Jesus had no desire to be a social reformer; He put all such mere external activities far from Him (Luke xii. 14).¹ Yet He introduced ideas on this subject too into men's minds, which altered the social structure from the foundations. In the ancient world there was no attempt to bridge the gulf between master and servant. Jesus lifted the whole subject to a different level by His one word: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xxiii. 11). While He refrained from setting up any rules for society, His one commandment, "Love thy neighbour as thyself," brought such a stir into the whole social machinery that it has never since come to rest.

What a comprehension of history Jesus had too! While Paul sharply discriminates between the pre-Christian and the Christian age, Jesus saw indeed the imperfections of earlier ages, yet desired only to perfect by His actions and conduct what was already existing and effective in the Old Testament. All history was to Him a single revelation of His Father's love.

A modern theologian has said of Jesus, "He redeemed the world from the theologians." There is certainly little that we call theological about Him, yet no one ever spoke more gladly or more profoundly of God

¹ He never relieved poverty by a miracle; and though He healed the centurion's servant, He did not demand the man's release.

and divine things. He was the greatest theosophist in the true sense of the word, yet He never strove to express Himself as such. He gave classical and everlasting expression to the whole merciful love and the pre-eminence and grandeur of God in two simple words—"Father," "in heaven."

Jesus the orator, the poet, the thinker, in every sphere crowned with laurels of victory—truly His was a brilliant mind. And now consider how Buddha, Mohammed, and all the others, till we come to Luther and those who followed him, achieved success by making use of the mood and tendencies of the age in which they lived, being caught up in the current of their time and borne aloft by the tide. Jesus, on the contrary, had to contend against the tendencies and currents of His age. Even the Twelve had to learn to adjust themselves to His way of thinking, otherwise they "had no part in Him" (John xiii. 8). Among the rabbis it was considered the supreme wisdom to teach only what had been learned from the past. When or where did Jesus ever depend on the ideas of others? On the contrary, He set Himself against the old ways of thoughts with His words, "But I say unto you" (Matt. v. 21 ff.). Wellhausen is right when he says, "The burden of history which encumbers the Jew does not affect Him; He does not suffocate in the mustiness of their ancient garments." Without effort He drew from the inexhaustible depths of His own nature more than many others could claim to possess after years of toil and learning. Think of it, an ordinary craftsman, without any real schooling! What genius He must have had that we must set Him, considered even as a thinker, in the very forefront of mankind, so far as religion and ethics are concerned.

In the mental development of all religious pioneers and moral reformers we are aware of a break. They begin by standing in the very thick of the theories and

ideas out of which they later point the way of escape to others. One thinks at once of Paul and Luther. But in Jesus we do not see the slightest trace of such a change. From the first day He had chosen the way He was to go, and His path led straight ahead.

Mohammed belongs to the Arabs, Buddha to the people of India, Confucius to the Chinese. None of these three has made much impression outside his own people. In outward appearance Jesus was so much a Jew that the Samaritan woman recognized Him immediately as such (John iv. 9), and all His life He continued working amongst the Jews. Yet His work was capable of being completely identified with every nation and people; not that one nation took this and another that from Him, but every nation is moulded by Him to His "idea." Such considerations must make us conscious of the vast greatness of "the Man," Jesus, "the Son of man" for humanity.

And yet all this is only the forecourt of His personality. We have not yet entered the real holy place. Frederick the Great once wrote in anger to Voltaire, whom he idolized, "Statues should be erected to you for your works, but your conduct deserves the galleys." How often a man's ability and behaviour are poles asunder. In the carpenter's son from Nazareth there is a unity such as one great in the realm of the mind once desired for himself: "great thoughts and a pure heart." Let us now turn our eyes from the great thoughts of Jesus and fix them on something greater still—His pure heart.

PART TWO

IN THE HOLY PLACE

THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PERSONALITY
OF JESUS

(A) JESUS AND GOD

CHAPTER I

HIS KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. HIS JOY AND TRUST IN GOD

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

MATTHEW V. 48

IN the days of Jesus belief was not easy in Israel. Had it been otherwise, religion would not have been so strongly tinged with nationalism. Whenever suffering and distress came upon the nation religion fell into disesteem, each time this happened the Jews questioning in anger, "Israel, where is now thy God?" ; and each time such questioning drove many to renounce their belief. Others, particularly the circle of the Pharisees, clung all the more to the prophetic inheritance of the past with its hopes of a Messiah, but their religion with its strictly exclusive righteousness showed clearly the marks of bitter struggle; the need for self-preservation made them hard and narrow. Added to this the Sadducees were severe critics of the past, forcing those who loved the truth to a serious scrutiny of the Scriptures. There was too a flippant scepticism abroad, inquiring with Pilate, half in pity and half in mockery, "What is truth?" (John xviii. 38). But in Israel at that time there was little of the broad, inborn piety which possesses God and rejoices in the possession.

Yet in His consciousness of God, Jesus was not affected by these tendencies of His time. He bore God as a living possession in His soul. As long as we move only on the plane of thought our conception of God is of someone far distant. Jesus never laboriously deduced the existence of God from His observation of the cosmic world nor searched for proof of His being after the manner of our cosmological experts. He *experienced* God, and that was enough. He felt His soul moved by a deep and mysterious

power, His knowledge of God came from His intercourse with Him. In speaking of Him He felt Himself in full possession of the presence of God. He knew nothing of the "nevertheless" of belief. It is not correct to say that He too had to come to a heroic decision to believe in spite of all contradictions. Jesus was never in doubt about God, for He always felt His nearness.

He stood always in the presence of God. The simple directness with which Jesus viewed the heavenly Father, His being and His will, is far above anything similar in history. He had a mysterious, penetrating vision which pierced to the very heart of things. In our day nature has intruded herself between God and man. We are caught up in her machinations, we are dependent on her in a thousand ways. And so there are many things we fear besides God. Jesus never ranked God and nature together. He knew nothing of the "unconditional and unreserved recognition of mathematically constructed and mechanically operative nature." Nature never seemed to Him self-dependent. For Him the dispensation of nature was simply the dispensation of God. Natural blessings or suffering are sent not from nature but from God, who is at the centre of nature. Not a bird dies, not a hair of our heads falls without His knowledge (Matt. x. 29, 30). It is He who sends rain and sunshine (Matt. v. 45). He saw God everywhere, strong and powerful in all His works. "My Father worketh hitherto"—His vision penetrated so far that He saw beyond earthly things to the Father. He saw Him still when men put fetters upon Him and the Son of man was "delivered" into the hands of sinners.

To His penetration of vision we must add a similar keenness of hearing. He heard God everywhere: in nature, in His experience, in His own heart (John ii. 4; vii. 8, 10; xi. 6f.). He never had to investigate and search for God's will. His one care was to do this will of which He was every moment so clearly conscious.

Does this mean that Jesus had merely a richer experi-

ence of God's working in the soul? Is He, as people tell us, merely a religious genius such as may appear again in history? If we think so, we have not grasped the peculiar grandeur and greatness of His advent. Jesus was not one of the many seekers after God—not even if we call Him one of the most successful. He did not attain to His experience of God by way of mystical ecstasy with its preceding ascetic morality. There was no special moment in His life when some revelation opened His eyes to God. He never had to break with previous conceptions nor to struggle laboriously towards communion with Him. It seemed natural to Him that His religious relationship to God should be that of a Son. Even as a child He was unconsciously drawn to His Father—as water flows downhill or the flower turns to the sun, without reasoning out the why and the wherefore. To Him it all seemed a matter of course. And therefore He alone *knows* the Father (Matt. xi. 27). This peculiar knowledge of God was inborn from the beginning. It was directly derived from His inherent unity and His unbroken communion with the Father. He appears as the revealer of God to mankind and can say to us all, "Learn of Me" (Matt. xi. 29). He knew (John xii. 49 f.; Matt. xi. 27), He had seen (John viii. 38), and He was so certain of this that He could say, "I know Him, and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar" (John viii. 55). It is true that this peculiar knowledge of God removes Him far from other men; He alone is in possession of such knowledge, others can learn it only from Him. There is a profound reason for His discrimination between "My Father" and "your Father." It would not be adequate in this connection to say "our Father," for His relationship to God is different from that of other men.

"Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." What new revelation of the Father did the Son give to the world? It is not enough merely to point out that Jesus

was keenly conscious of the uniqueness and majesty of God. It is true that heaven is His throne and earth His footstool (Matt. v. 34 f., xxiii. 22); God is the Lord of heaven and earth (Matt. xi. 25); He can destroy both soul and body in hell—reason enough that all the world should fear Him (Matt. x. 28); all creation exists to glorify Him (Matt. v. 16); its ultimate aim is to hallow His name (Matt. vi. 9). Doubtless these are the words and the views of Jesus, but had not Israel known all that before? The new and original part of His message—unheard-of in the world before His coming—was the knowledge of God as the loving Father, the tidings that His nature is love. Previously, indeed, God had sometimes been conceived of as exercising paternal control over certain pious individuals; occasionally, though very seldom, He is designated Father in the Psalms (Ps. lxxviii. 5; ciii. 13). But this characteristic was never proclaimed as being the basis and constitution of His being. In Judaism God had become unapproachable and distant, the author of a law which lay like a spider's web over the souls of men; later He was to come as the Judge, minutely reckoning out the debit and credit of each individual. God's goodness towards the children of men was then nothing more than the reward of human righteousness. Among both Jews and Gentiles the ruling religious feeling bore the stamp of fear (Rom. viii. 15). All that the natural man knew of God was His law; so far as he did not abjure God altogether his relation to Him was one of fear. And then came Jesus, giving to the world a new and almost incredible message: in His innermost nature God is the loving Father, caring for the individual, concerning Himself with the smallest details in the lives of us all (Matt. vi. 26 ff., 11; x. 29). His pardoning love is that of a Father, directed indeed especially towards those who have strayed from Him (Luke xv. 6, 9, 24). He gives the same reward to all, "because He is good" (Matt. xx. 15).

Yet this did not mean that His Father was easy-going.

"You probably think of Him as a weak old man?" asked Ibsen. Jesus knew of no weakness in God; He did not take exception to "the bloodthirsty, wrathful God of the Old Testament." He could not conceive of His Father as being without holiness and austerity. But if in the Old Testament the religious relationship of man to God was that of a covenant, on one side the keeping of the commandments, on the other the payment of a reward, now everything was based on mercy. The loving Father—in these words we find the essence of God. And no one knew it except the Son.

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If we turn now to Jesus' piety, we find it entirely lacking in certain characteristics which we are accustomed to find in others great in the Kingdom of God. Above all He was certainly without the gratitude of the redeemed sinner. Jesus did not know what it was to be reconciled to God. He did not need forgiveness of sins, the greatest gift that the Kingdom of God brings; He never had to think of the salvation of His own soul. The unity of our will with the Father which is the goal of our piety stood at the commencement of His path. Jesus never had to seek the love of His Father, for He possessed it all the time. Thus, whatever may be said to the contrary, His life lacked humility or any feeling of inferiority before God. The sense of dependence was not the basis of His piety, nor yet the profound and joyful recognition of God as the one omnipotent and living God. Much that Jesus said in this connection was said for the sake of others. He Himself experienced an intimacy with God which no other man has or may have without blasphemy. It is no echo from His own spiritual life when He says to His disciples, "Fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell" (Matt. x. 28), or when He teaches them to fear God as the Judge (Matt. xii. 36). His belief in God is lacking in anxious fear. Nor did He know any-

thing of the petty fear of breaking the second commandment, which was so common among the Jews of that day (Matt. vi. 24 ff.).¹ He was not afraid of God in the raging storm (Matt. viii. 24). One need only read the Psalms to see what different emotions a storm aroused in the pious adherents of the old covenant. When God's hands were at work Jesus was rather filled with serenity and assurance: He feared only the hands of men.

But where are we to find the heart and centre of His piety? Here there stands a Man who for the first and only time in history substantiates God's words, "Thou shalt love Me with thy whole heart." The heart of His piety was His loving joy in God. The piety of all other men has something selfish about it. The piety of Jesus desired nothing from God; it was born out of abundance—in loving joy in the God whom He bore in His heart as the treasure above all others. This essential part of Jesus' piety needed no development; we see it in the Child, strong and mature, and it runs unbroken through His whole life. His joy *in* God dawns anew as His spirit is submerged in Him. His joy *with* God is in doing His work. It was Jesus' delight that His Father should rule in the world, that was His consuming passion. From men's point of view His life was one of increasing labour; from God's point of view it was like the repose of a ship floating quietly and peacefully in the securest haven. He lived before God, in continual inner communion with God, happy in His possession of Him. His soul was finely sensitive, He could always say with assurance, "I am not alone" (John viii. 29; xvi. 32). From this joy in God there flowed a profound and majestic serenity even in His most trying work. He lived one day at a time, placing the morrow in God's hands. Was there ever such another life in which joy in God was so much the real nerve and

¹ "God." The Jew of the time avoided using the name of God. Note from Matt. v. 34 ff. how many expressions were used in the place of "God."

sinew that the atmosphere of rejoicing was always apparent?

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Jesus' joy in God was bound up with His trust in Him. It is true He never presumed on this, never claimed God's protection recklessly or in frivolous arrogance. In the wilderness He naturally and simply rejected such an attitude, as tempting God (Matt. iv. 7). And thus, to the last He did not hesitate to escape from His enemies, to betake Himself to some safe place, even "secretly." Not even the certainty that He was to die in Jerusalem (Matt. iv. 12; xii. 15), and that His hour was not yet come (John vii. 6) could lead Him to take careless risks or to presume on God's protection. Rather He modestly took those ways of escape which natural human caution advised. Yet in acting thus He was absolutely sure of His Father's protection. "I am not alone, the Father is with Me"—the consciousness of this never left Him. Many people have in their inmost hearts the thought of a divine, merciful providence, but Jesus had not only the thought, He really was always serene and composed. The Psalter was His book of prayer too, yet we never hear from Him the fearful cry uttered by the pious adherents of the old covenant in the face of their enemies. Do we ever find Him trembling before the force of the storm? We are nervous and timid when night spreads dark shadows around us. To Jesus the night was a dear friend in whose darkness He could feel God's presence better than during the noisy day. In spite of ourselves we are fearful when we are alone in the wide expanses of nature, caught up in her silent, mysterious toils; but it was just such solitude that Jesus loved. He knew that everything was in God's hands, even the sparrow on the housetop (Matt. x. 29), and He had the conviction that the very hairs of His head were numbered (Matt. x. 30). This knowledge rendered Him absolutely care-free. He would have felt Himself no better than a "Gentile" had

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He taken thought for food and clothing, shelter and protection (Matt. vi. 32). His strong, robust courage and His great serenity grew out of this trust in God. His work was never restless, with the haste and flurry due ultimately to labouring without God. On the contrary, work and rest followed each other as ordained by God. He described it in His parable of the sower, sleeping and rising night and day, while the seed grows of itself (Mark iv. 27). He too acted in the same way, confident in the belief that God Himself would look after the harvest. Unlike the prophets of the Old Testament (1 Kings xix. 4) or the Baptist (Matt. xi. 3), His belief never faltered. This confidence was often enough put to the test during His lifetime, but it withstood even the greatest trials to which His faith was subjected. In a world of misery and suffering we often fail to see the heavenly Father, but Jesus never lost confidence, not even at the end, for He cried, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46). Even when God seemed to have forsaken Him, Jesus would not forsake God. "Eli, Eli, My God, My God," thus He clung to the Father with tenacious belief even in this darkest hour of His life (Matt. xxvii. 46).

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What we have said above about Jesus' trust in God is doubtless based on correct and trustworthy observation, and yet it seems to us to be only one side of the question. A Man who could say to His disciples in one breath, "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (John xiv. 1), or to Martha, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God," thus promising the vision of divine glory as the reward of belief in Himself (John xi. 40; cf. v. 25 f.), a Man who forbade His disciples to be anxious when they were brought before the judges, because He could promise "to give them a mouth and wisdom," thus leading them to place their trust in Himself (Luke xxi. 14 f.), such a man's trust in God is not

that of other men. One cannot get rid of the impression that what He said about trust in God was, for the most part, for the benefit of others. His own trust in God was mingled with confidence in Himself. One need only read the story of the storm on the lake to become conscious of the assurance of a strong, self-confident nature. Here, and in similar cases, we cannot perceive the humble if steadfast confidence that the children of men possess, but rather the certain assurance of a Man who has His place by the side of God. It does not surprise us therefore when we hear Him say, "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). Only one who has such power possesses the assurance which it gives, and therefore it is not seemly to speak of His trust in God as though it were like that of other people. There is rather a mysterious intercommunion and oneness between Jesus and God which will often astonish and puzzle us.

CHAPTER II

THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

IF for the Gentiles and the Jews religion was a part of their life, a supplementary addition to their other business, to Jesus it was life itself. As our existence is dependent on air, so His soul could only breathe in dependence on God. It would have seemed sin to Him to think of God only once in a while but usually to live without Him. When His life was busiest His ear listened for His Father's voice, His eye perceived what the Father showed Him. In all His work His union and unity with God persisted, for all He did was done in Him. Jesus' spirit was always composed as that of no other man has been, and therefore we know that His life was one of devotion and worship. The fig-tree off the high road which deceived the hungry with its wealth of foliage was to His reflective soul a terrible parable (Mark xi. 12; perhaps also the deaf and dumb man, Mark vii. 34; cf. p. 415).

Luther, confronted by an age which believed the contemplative life to be the highest possible, realized the tremendous importance of work, and taught men that work is worship. In our own day the praise of work is sung louder than ever before. "The latest gospel in this world is: Know thy work and do it," said Carlyle; and in another passage he declared that "the divine glow of work is like a refining fire in which poison is destroyed." Work was constantly commended by Jesus. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work" (John ix. 4). We see about Him little of the contemplative life. He paid no heed to the words of the monk, "The angels do not come to the man who is in constant intercourse with other men." Work kept Him from His food (Mark iii. 20);

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tired out by His labour He sank exhausted to sleep on a pillow (Mark iv. 38). If ever any man worked in the service of God it was He, for everything He did was "the work of the Father" (John x. 37; v. 36). In all His busy life in the world He remained in perfect unity with God—a spirit of complete equanimity, inward peace in the midst of outward turmoil.

But the Father's business was something different from *resting* in the Father. Communion with God, always a part of Jesus' life, became alive and vivid in prayer. The presence of God was always real to Him and His life was filled with quiet devotion, but prayer was more than this. In prayer a man must give himself up to God entirely, for prayer is talking with Him. It is only by prayer that we can get into real and living communion with God. If this is so, work could never push prayer into a corner in Jesus' life.

Pray and work were Jesus' maxims, but prayer always came first. He is staying in a town the name of which we do not know. The people want to hear Him, they need His help, but there must be time for prayer first (Luke v. 16). His heart is consumed with pity (Matt. ix. 36) and He knows that His work is nearing an end (John ix. 4), but He cannot save time by omitting prayer. "Belong to yourself before you belong to others," said Bernard of Clairvaux to his pupil, Pope Eugenius II, and he borrowed this counsel from Jesus, who could not have endured life without His hours of solitude.¹

No other human life has ever kept such a perfect balance between receiving and giving out. It is like very regular respiration, the most perfect adjustment between self-resignation and self-assertion. When the world tried

¹ What a contrast this is to Confucius! Once, when the master was very ill, Tsze-lu asked that he might be allowed to pray for him. The master answered, "Is it allowed to do so?" Tsze-lu replied, "Yes, indeed, for in the Eulogies it is written, 'We turn in prayer to you, ye heavenly and earthly spirits.'" Whereupon the master, "It is long since I have prayed."

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Him most sorely, tempting Him (Matt. iv; John vi. 15) or seeking to arrest His work (Luke ix. 29, 22), when He was almost overcome by the pressure of His business with all its attendant anxieties (Mark i. 35; Luke v. 16), we always receive the impression that His prayer-life became more intense. It is as though the world were trying to loosen the bonds between His Father and Himself, and so He had to bind them more closely.

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Christianity has learned the art of prayer from Jesus. It is therefore little wonder that every detail of His prayer-life is of deep importance to us.

First of all, how austere and simple it was. The world of those days was accustomed to something very different. Men preferred to pray where they were most conspicuous—at the street corners or in the courts of the synagogue (Matt. vi. 5). Jesus nearly always prayed in solitude and quiet, advising His followers to “enter into their closet, and shut the door” (Matt. vi. 6). First He sent away the crowd, and even the disciples (Mark vi. 45 f.; xiv. 32, 35); He climbed a hill (Mark vi. 46) or departed into a solitary place (Mark i. 35; Luke v. 16). He waited until the night spread her dark wings over the earth, transforming the world into a silent chamber (Luke vi. 12); or, again, we are told that He prayed while others were still sleeping (Mark i. 35; Luke iv. 42). We have learned from Him that a man needs no spectators when he prays, it is enough for him to be alone with God (Matt. vi. 6).

In our day there are many super-spiritual people who, scorning prayer-books, consider that extempore prayer is the only correct method. Luther had a better understanding of Jesus' way, for he could repeat again and again with ardent devotion prayers which he knew by heart, and he always carried the Psalter with him as a prayer-book. Jesus did not consider it beneath His dignity to take from the Psalter that prayer which He prayed on the Cross (Ps. xxii. 1; xxxi. 5).

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Jesus often prayed aloud (Matt. xxvi. 39; xxvii. 46; Luke xxiii. 46; John xvii. 1 ff.), and we are told of Luther too that he was partial to this form of prayer. The reason was probably the same in both cases—they were carried away by what they were doing, or their need forced the words to their lips. According to His own telling, it was only in isolated cases that Jesus' audible prayers were for the benefit of the people round about Him (John xi. 42; xvii. 13).

We know of Luther that he liked to stand at the window when he prayed. Did he learn from Jesus to lift his eyes to heaven? Again and again we are told that He raised His eyes (John xi. 41; xvii. 1), that He looked up to heaven (Mark vi. 41; vii. 34), and especially when He offered thanks at the breaking of bread that He raised His eyes toward heaven (Matt. xiv. 19). Jesus was not afraid of fixed outward forms for use in prayer. It was assuredly not only in Gethsemane that He "fell on His face before God" (Matt. xxvi. 39). And it was such an inveterate custom of His to ask a blessing on the food He ate that the disciples at Emmaus recognized Him in this act (Luke xxiv. 30, 31). But certainly the outward form never interfered with the inward fervour.

The outward form never seemed to Him important enough to make rules about for His disciples. He liked to pray in the hills, but He knew that hills are not necessary for the worship of God (John iv. 21). It came naturally to Him to raise His eyes to heaven, but He never made this or other gestures obligatory on His disciples as the Mohammedans and the Jews did. Three separate times He kneeled in Gethsemane on the night of the betrayal, but He never advised His disciples as to the measure of their prayers. He wished to avoid all appearance of prayer operating *ex opere operato*, that is, by means of mere performance. His daily work was supported and upheld by prayer. He prayed early in the morning and in the evening He kneeled again before His Father. He folded His hands at table and looked up to the Almighty

before the blessing. But His manner of prayer was far above the babbling of the Jews and Gentiles. Often His shortest prayers were the most ardent. He did not spend His time only in the highways and byways of this world but held daily intercourse in the court of the great King.

Let us try to penetrate deeper into the spirit of His prayer. There are three things to be said about it. First, with Jesus to pray was to love. How many petitions for others we find in His prayers, what a great load of love for the children of men! We need only read what is known as the High Priestly prayer (John xvii.) to see how little is asked for Himself and how many ardent petitions there are for others. They are often quite specialized, concerned with particular individuals—for instance, with Peter (Luke xxii. 32). We realize how natural it must have been for Jesus to pray for His friends when we think of His prayer for those who insulted and persecuted Him (Matt. v. 44 ff.). With Him praying meant loving—loving aloud—even in the hour of death, when He opened His lips once more for those who tortured Him (Luke xxiii. 34).

But love was directed above all towards the Father. No doubt His prayer exhibits praying need, but still more, praying love. He was not concerned so much with *uti Deo* (making use of God) as with *frui Deo* (enjoyment of God); He desired to rejoice in His God. "How I love Thee, O God!"—that was the dominant note of His prayer. The more hardly He was treated by the world the more brightly burned this glow of love to the Father. "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come"—His dearest wish was that God's honour should be vindicated. He could give praise for everything, even for the revelation of glory to babes and sucklings (Matt. xi. 25). Praise is the overflow of a loving, adoring heart. According to the teaching of the rabbis, Hiskia did not become Messiah because he failed to join in the song of praise

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after being rescued from Sanherib. Jesus went to His death "after they had sung an hymn."

Pascal makes God say to man, "Thou wouldest not seek Me hadst thou not already found Me." To Jesus prayer was the necessary answer to the voice of God which He heard everywhere because He lived so much in Him. Prayer went like a divine shuttle backwards and forwards between Him and the Father—speech and answer, giving and receiving, a continual loving aloud, in the most intimate tones that the world has ever heard. God had already been designated the "Father" of Israel, and even the words "our Father" had once been heard in prayer (Isa. lxiii. 16; Wisdom xiv. 3). But no one had ever dared to say "Father" in the sense of "my Father"—quite particularly "my Father," different from any other. Jesus stood all the time on an intimate footing with God.¹ On the still, dark Lake of Galilee, probably for the first and only time prayer became a loving aloud, full and undisturbed, a transformation of existence into pure subjectiveness—He in the Father and the Father in Him.

But with Jesus prayer also meant taking. He was firmly convinced that prayer could influence God's decisions (Luke xviii. 3 ff.). Without any hesitation He urged His followers to pray about the most actual matters—for instance, that their flight should not take place in winter or on the Sabbath (Matt. xxiv. 20). Should not He who has given us ears be ready Himself to hear? To Jesus prayer was an audible cry for help, a seeking for solace from the love that passeth understanding. Yet He never prayed for special things for Himself, except perhaps in Gethsemane, but even there

¹ "Abba" is one of the few actual words of Jesus which has come down to us. It was soon made into a frequently used formula, which is explained in Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15, but by that time it was used in the sense of "our Father."

only conditionally (Matt. xxvi. 39). He did indeed say once that such petitions were possible for Him also (Matt. xxvi. 53)—it had to do with the sending of twelve legions of angels for His protection—but He never made use of them. The “taking” in His prayers was on a far higher plane, concerned with the inward need of His soul. He did not seek for gifts, He did not crave for happiness; what He desired was the Giver. Without God Himself His gifts could not bring comfort to the soul of Jesus. It was only at rest when it had broken through everything and reached God. So in prayer He continuously laid hold of Him, and God worked in His soul. In such hours God gave Him the balm of the Holy Ghost; from His childhood it was at these times that He “grew and waxed strong” inwardly and mysteriously (Luke ii. 40, 52), making contact with primeval force. These were the hours of strengthening for the Son of God, hours of deepening union with His Father. Here lay the real source of His power. His prayer was a spiritual working. In conversation with His Father He made sure of taking the right path in moments of difficulty. Certainly His spirit was willing at all times, but in prayer He mastered the weakness—though not the sinful weakness—of the flesh. In His hours of temptation He prayed more urgently, more continuously, so that His soul might be kept from harm (Matt. xxvii. 46). This most occupied of all men was also the greatest Man of prayer, and this not by chance. Care and anxiety are crippling things, but prayer gave this Man freedom in His work, winning afresh for Him the gladness of a mind in real union with God. And so with Jesus prayer meant at all times a blessed “taking.”

Prayer had a third meaning for Jesus, a meaning as great as the other two. For Him it meant sacrifice; in prayer He sacrificed His own will. Yes, in prayer He presented Himself ready for oblation. This can be clearly

seen in many places. Let us mention just a few of them.

The first intimation of His suffering was preceded by solitary prayer (Luke ix. 18). After the feeding of the five thousand, two things were made clear to His mind—His lack of success as a whole, and the approaching Cross. The following night of prayer signified nothing less than an offering by the Son of God of Himself: Let it begin, I will gladly bear it all! (John vi. 15). Think, too, of the High Priestly prayer. One of its essential notes is, "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son" (John xvii. 1). Here we have no actual petition, but only the assurance that He is prepared, and puts Himself at the disposal of His Father: Father, here I am! In that hour—and similarly when the Greeks came to see Him (John xii. 27)—prayer was for Jesus nothing but sacrifice. There is another occasion we can recall, the hour preceding the betrayal of the Son of man. Up till that time Jesus had no doubt known of the sacrifice that was required of Him, but now it was to be consummated. He died for the first time beneath the olive-trees of Gethsemane, without any opiate. In this hour especially prayer meant for Him sacrifice. But does not this shed light on other hours of His life, the meaning of which is more obscure? First on His baptism. As He kneeled in the water, taking His place among sinners (Luke iii. 21), was He not already showing Himself ready to bear the sins of the world, praying the while? (John i. 29; cf. my *Death of Jesus*).

Is not John perhaps right when he tells us that Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray Him? (John vi. 64, 70). If this were so, we can then understand why Jesus spent the night in prayer before choosing the apostles (Luke vi. 12). The hour in which He called the Twelve demanded an immense sacrifice from Him: He took the serpent into His bosom.

How true it is that for Him prayer meant sacrifice! Such knowledge makes the contrast which Fichte pro-

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pounds merely foolish—the child petitions, the man wills. With Jesus prayer was very often the hardest work—man's work. We can understand, too, why on three occasions after such prayers Jesus was glorified by God—in His baptism, in the transfiguration, and on the day when the Greeks visited Him (Luke iii. 21; ix. 29; John xii. 28).

* * * * *

Who does not feel that Jesus gives us an example in praying, and in renunciation too? And yet it would be wrong to depict His prayer life as merely an example. Here, too, He was not like us, and we cannot altogether follow in His footsteps. The fact that He never joined with His disciples in prayer must make us pause and consider. It is true He made intercession for them, as the Master of the house He folded His hands in prayer before they ate, and at the end of the Passover He joined with them in the hymn of praise (Ps. cxiii-cxviii; Matt. xxvi. 30); but we do not know of a single prayer in which the solitary "I" was changed into the intimate "we." Nor is it fitting to say, as many do, that in the Lord's Prayer Jesus allowed us to see into the holy place of His devotions. On the contrary, He emphasized the words, "After this manner therefore pray ye" (Matt. vi. 9). His praying was different, and not only in the fifth petition. Even the commencement of His prayers was different. Not only did He never pray together with His disciples, and went apart from them to pray, but we have proof also that His prayer was radically divergent from theirs. They were to use the publican's petition, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13), but even in death He had no need of such a prayer; even in that hour He could use the words of the Pharisee, "I am not as other men are" (Luke xviii. 11).

No prayer of confession ever left His lips, nor yet any prayer of consecration. He prayed for others that they might be consecrated and that their faith should not fail,

but such a petition was never needed for Himself. The fact, too, that petition occupies a large part in the prayers of men—in the Lord's Prayer Jesus recognized this—differentiates Him from others. Petition is an acknowledgement of need, but we cannot find it in the Man who knew that "all things were delivered unto Him of the Father" (Matt. xi. 27). This gives His prayer a different note; it is filled with thanksgiving, praise, and worship. When He makes intercession it is for others and He knows that He is in agreement with the Father (John xi. 42). There is something of royal power in His assurance to Peter, "But I have prayed for thee" (Luke xxii. 32). This was enough for Peter, for Jesus could say, showing little humility, "Father, I will" (John xvii. 24). Thus it should not surprise us that He who up to the last made intercession for so many people, never had need of the intercessions of others. How different He was in this respect from His greatest apostle! (Rom. xv. 30; 2 Cor. i. 11; Col. iv. 3; 1 Thess. v. 25). It is true that, in contrast to him, He had Himself power to lose His life or to keep it. Such a Man is not dependent on the help of others, as we are.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND THE SCRIPTURES

JESUS' Bible was what we call the Old Testament. These books were in fact His Bible from His earliest years until He breathed His last. He lived in the Old Testament history. In His teaching He referred constantly to such characters as Cain and Abel, to Noah and the Flood, to Abraham and Lot, to David and Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, to Elijah and Naaman, to Jonah and Zechariah, and how many more (Matt. vi. 29; xii. 3 f., 40, 42; xxiii. 35; Luke iv. 25, 27; xvii. 26, 27; John viii. 40). In the hours of His distress and in the hour of death prayers from the Old Testament rose to His lips, in Gethsemane as well as on the Cross (Ps. xliii. 5; Matt. xxvi. 38; Ps. vi. 4; xlii. 6; John xii. 27; Ps. xxii. 1; Matt. xxvii. 46; Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46). He knew every detail of the Bible, and we can hardly go far enough in imagining how intimate He was with it. We see this most clearly in the great use He made of Scripture passages and phrases in His teaching. We find endless spontaneous allusions to words of Scripture which prove how at home He was in the Old Testament world of thought. He speaks of drinking the cup (Isa. li. 17; John xviii. 11; Matt. xxvi. 39); or of the stones crying out (Hab. ii. 11; Luke xix. 40); of the forced repentance of the evildoer (Ps. vi. 8; Matt. vii. 23); or of considering the ravens (Ps. cxlvii. 9; Luke xii. 24); of the destruction of the Temple (Jer. xxii. 5; Matt. xxiii. 38); or of the greeting that Israel would one day give Him (Ps. cxviii. 26; Matt. xxiii. 39); of hills falling on the people (Hos. x. 8; Luke xxiii. 30), or of treading serpents underfoot (Ps. xci. 13; Luke x. 19); of those that seeing, see not (Isa. vi. 9 f.; Luke viii. 10), or of Capernaum being exalted unto heaven (Isa. xiv. 13 ff.; Luke x. 15);

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of a son being divided against his father (Mic. vii. 6; Luke xii. 53), or of one kingdom rising against another (Isa. xix. 2; Luke xxi. 10). We can multiply the instances almost indefinitely and they are all turns of thought which Jesus took from the inexhaustible treasure-house of the Bible, with which He was so thoroughly acquainted.

This intimacy with the Scriptures was not easily come by. Nowadays it is made much simpler for us. It is true that the rolls were available for Him in the synagogue, but probably only there. We hear much of His being alone in those years of His life of which we know most, but we never hear that He used such hours of solitude for reading. His study of the Scriptures must therefore have preceded His life of action; but in the years of sowing and of combat He lived essentially on what He had already acquired, taking it from the treasury of His memory. In those days memory was perhaps more faithful than it is to-day and, in addition, the Scriptures were without doubt the only book Jesus had ever read.

People speak very scornfully nowadays of learning by heart, and in schools children receive less and less encouragement to do so. Jesus knew a great part of the Bible by heart and was always gratefully conscious of such inculcated knowledge—for instance, in the solitary time of temptation in the wilderness, and in the noisy days of strife in Jerusalem, as well as in the last hour on the Cross. It was a treasure collected in the good days which, when times changed, became for Him bread and water, shield and sword.

Jesus read His Bible in a special way, knowing very well that here a thousand years of history were spread out before His eyes. But He did not regard it with the eyes of the modern historical writer: His interest in it was purely religious. For Him it was the storehouse of the acts of the living and righteous God. His understanding of it was expressed altogether in thoughts of divine teaching, the revelation of the divine will, the setting up of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, of

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prophecy and its fulfilment. It was a history which had its origin in the acts of God, and its continuation, too, was to be accomplished by the acts of God. His attitude to the Bible was quite different from that of the Jews of His time. To the Judaism of Palestine the Bible was a collection of valuable ordinances, the examination of which was the task of scribes and rabbis. To the Judaism of Alexandria it was a collection of mysterious learning into which they fitted their own religious and philosophical views. Jesus found God in the Bible, and each time He read it He entered into living communion with His Father.

For us the Bible has been so overloaded with questions of literary and other criticism that we often lose sight of its real meaning among such secondary details. For the Son of man the Scripture served as food, He really lived upon every word of it. He was always on the lookout for the self-testimony of God, and He had a deep reverence for the Bible because He knew that He owed His knowledge of the acts and the sayings of God in all ages to this book; because He knew that the will of God was here revealed to Him, and that God had spoken to Him through it times without number. He had a deep reverence for the Bible. Next to prayer the Bible was the element in His religious life from which there flowed a stream of life, and He made constant use of it. Here He nourished His mind and spirit; here He experienced His God. Jesus did not discover the Father in His observation of nature, but found Him clear and distinct in the Scriptures. Even as a Child He sought to learn from history more about His Father, for we are told that in the Temple He both heard and asked questions (Luke ii. 46).

Jesus had a key to the Bible which never failed Him—the spiritual kinship of His own religious life to the Scriptures. He had an immediate understanding of the religious content of every passage. What scientific research attains by roundabout ways He saw at a glance (Mark

xii. 19 ff.). There were no stumbling-blocks for Him in the Bible, because He knew the power of God and used it as a means of interpretation (Mark xii. 24). His exposition of the Scriptures, though simple and natural, is yet at the same time immeasurably profound (Mark xii. 26 f.). Knowing the power of God, He used it as a means of interpretation and tempered His message to the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. xix. 8). He had, too, an open mind for the development within the Bible itself. And who can deny that He had a very clear comprehension of the value to be placed on the different books of the Old Testament. It cannot be by chance that He never quoted from Joshua, Judges, Ecclesiastes, Ezra, Nehemiah, or Esther.

There is no doubt that Jesus made as much use of the Bible as any man can do. We have already noted that it served Him as a sword and shield against Satan (Matt. iv. 4, 6, 10) and against men. His faith rested on the words, "It is written"; they shed a light on His path. It was not only to the crying of the children in the Temple that they gave Him the right interpretation (Matt. xxi. 16; Ps. viii. 2); the Bible was of use to Him also in His teaching. It is true that the peculiar religious life which had mysteriously stirred and taken shape in His heart from His childhood onwards, and His familiar intercourse with the Father, both gave Him a key of sympathetic understanding for the Holy Book; but, on the other hand, it seemed also as though the Scriptures brought Him a full understanding of all these emotions removing them from the unconscious into the light of day.

And above all, how much comfort His Bible brought Him! We can hardly picture to ourselves vividly enough the strength and encouragement Jesus drew from Isa. lii. 13 to liii. 12, not only once, but daily for at least a considerable period of His life. His speech was permeated with allusions to these particular chapters. We are rightly warned against misusing the Bible as a kind of

oracle, and Jesus was never guilty of this. Yet when it was obviously right and fitting, when His clear-seeing eye could perceive the truth of the prophecy, then the Bible comforted Him with the knowledge that He must suffer, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Sometimes the passages quoted seem to us a little arbitrary, and in any case they could not have affected His fate in any degree (Num. xxi. 8; Ps. xli. 9; cxviii. 22; Isa. l. 6; Jonah i. 17; Zech. xiii. 7).¹ Yet in these words and in the fate of the men of God of ancient times He saw a portrait of Himself, and rejoiced in the analogy. Little circumstances which may seem of great importance to a man in dire need may not be noticed at all by others. But Jesus saw them clearly; because He had studied the Bible in the good days it brought Him comfort when the evil days came upon Him.

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All that we have noted so far about Jesus' attitude to the Scriptures can be directly applied to ourselves too. But it is obvious that there is something more to be said. No man has ever stood, or ever can stand, in the same relationship to the Scriptures as He did. There are two reasons for this. The first is, Jesus realized that He was the goal, aim, and end of the Scriptures; He had the conviction that they testified of Him alone (Luke xxiv. 27, 44; John v. 39, 46). At the very outset of His career, in the synagogue of Nazareth, He recognized that He Himself was the fulfilment of the Old Testament (Luke iv. 21); and towards the end of His life He entered as a King into Jerusalem, riding on the colt of an ass, because He knew it was of this Zechariah had spoken (Zech. ix. 9). Men were to see in Him the original of the prophetic picture painted by Isaiah (Matt. xi. 5; Isa.

¹ In the same way the fate of the Baptist (Mark ix. 13) was afterwards found to have been foretold in 1 Kings xix. 2, 10. But who could have applied such a passage to him before his death? Elijah did not meet his death by violence.

xxxv. 5 f.); and when there was no direct and conscious prophecy to fit the situation, He discovered innumerable unconscious prototypes which found their fulfilment in Him. These were often wonderful enough. To take only one of them, it was on the advice of Judah that Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver to the merchantmen so that they might sell him again with profit in Egypt for thirty pieces of silver (Gen. xxxvii. 26 ff.). And once again it was a Judas who sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (Matt. xxvi. 15). No one could ever have had the same consciousness that Jesus had in reading the Bible—It is speaking of you! He saw Himself in the law, in the prophets, in the Psalms—in the “corner-stone,” too, of the 118th Psalm (v. 22). Like His apostles of later days He found for His enemies and His friends the written testimony of Himself in the Bible (Luke xx. 16-18; xxiv. 27). And we cannot fail to note also that He perceived there portrayed the mission He had come to accomplish, even in the passages which speak quite clearly of God Himself and His redeeming work (Matt. xi. 10 = Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 14 = Mal. iv. 5, 6; Matt. xxi. 16 = Ps. viii. 2).

But there is another equally weighty reason why Jesus' attitude towards the Scriptures was different from that of any other man. He conducted Himself as Lord of the Scriptures, Himself fashioning, transforming, and continuing them, bringing them to consummation. He had independent sources of religious knowledge, and in this, which He had won for Himself, He possessed the real key to an understanding of the Old Testament. Those who heard Him received the impression that He did not speak as other men, but as “one having authority” (Matt. vii. 29; John vii. 46).

If we need proof that, in an age when the authority of the Bible was firmly established, He consciously transformed and extended its meaning, we need only read three verses from the fourth chapter of Tobit, and see how completely He altered each one of them (v. 3 = Luke

ix. 59 f.; v. 16=Matt. vii. 12; v. 18=Matt. ix. 10). Or hear how He set Himself up against the law of Moses with the significant words, "But *I* say unto you" (Matt. v. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44), or with the other phrase, "I am come to fulfil the Scriptures" (Matt. v. 17)—that is, to perfect and develop them as the gardener does the rose. He exercised His destructive criticism as freely on the prophets bringing down fire from heaven (Luke ix. 54) as on Lamech's boast of seventy-and-sevenfold revenge (Gen. iv. 24; Matt. xviii. 22). Men were expecting Elias to come and He called the Baptist His Elias, whose call to repentance was only hindered by the people (Mark ix. 13). He applied the Messianic title of "Shepherd" to Himself, but gave it an almost completely new significance by picturing the shepherd as giving his life for the sheep (Ezek. xxxiv. 23; John x. 11, 15, 17, 18). It is true that He revered the Scriptures, but as one directly authorized by God, He treated them with freedom and independence, extending and continuing their message.

He showed Himself Lord of the Scriptures too in the almost unlimited freedom with which He treated certain elements in the Bible, leaving on one side what did not suit Him (Exod. xxx. 13; Matt. xvii. 27),¹ and making use of what was akin to His own spirit. Here we have, in fact, the operation of the living cell with its mysterious functioning. The germinating cell, the inexplicable life-germinator, was within Him—even in boyhood His nature was inexplicable to His fellows—absorbing from the soil of the Scriptures the nourishment necessary to growth, as in nature the germinating cell absorbs it from the soil in which it is planted, and often, very often, completely transforming it in the process. The Bible is not a book with only one interpretation, the fact of the development within it prevents it from being so. We often find in it passages which seem to contradict each other (Matt.

¹ Cf. Luke iv. 19, the almost abrupt break made in the passage from Isa. lxi. 2—"the day of vengeance of our God."

iv. 6, 7). Jesus gave to many of them independent form and shape, and enjoyed complete liberty in making selection of the noblest parts of the Old Testament. How far removed, for instance, is Ps. xciv. 1 from His manner of thought. What kind of Messianic likeness could He have achieved based entirely on the Scriptures?¹ Then, what discord is often apparent in them! But at every step we find Jesus exercising perfect liberty and assurance in making use of the material akin to His spirit.² It is difficult to estimate to what extent the Scriptures formed this Man, or were for Him a source of knowledge. But often we get the impression that He approached the Bible with a great and fully assured knowledge of His own,³ that He knew that only the noblest parts applied to Himself (Isa. xlii. 2-3; lxi. 1-2) using them, as His disciples did later on, to prove and declare Himself in unexpected fashion before the heirs of the Bible (Num. xxi. 8, 9; John iii. 14; Jonah iii. 5; Matt. xii. 40; Ps. cx; Matt. xxii. 42 ff.).

¹ Miracles performed for his own benefit, 1 Kings xvii. 13, or for His own protection, 2 Kings i. 10.

² Isa. xxxv. 5, 6, simply omitting v. 4, in justification of His healing. Isa. lxi. 1, 2, in justification of His preaching. And then the linking together of Dan. vii. 13 ff. (the Son of man coming with clouds of heaven) with Isa. liii (the suffering servant of the Lord) with its momentous consequences.

³ It was because of this unique knowledge that He was able to tap veins of gold which up till then had been, and must have been, completely hidden (Matt. iv. 4; Mark xii. 26 f.). In the question about the Sabbath He quoted Hos. vi. 6 (Matt. xii. 7) as well as the story of the hungry David and the priests who did their duty in offering him the shewbread, and from the works of His Father led up to His own works, with which not even the Sabbath rest could interfere (John v. 17). Why did He not infer in the same way that as the Father rested on the seventh day the Son should rest also? (Gen. ii. 2). Did He not bring His own light to this question?

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AND THE LEGAL (RELIGIOUS) ORDINANCES OF HIS RACE

It is difficult for us to realize to any degree the important place which the Temple held in the consciousness of Israel. It was the dwelling-place of God, the place in which His people might find Him. Jesus, too, was pleased to give it the exalted name of "My Father's house" (John ii. 16), and even as a twelve-year-old Child He was irresistibly drawn to it. All through His life He conscientiously followed the pious custom of taking part in the feasts (John ii. 13; v. 1; vi. 4; vii. 2, 10; x. 22; xi. 55).¹ We may be sure that from the time He was twelve years old He never missed a Passover, with its sacrificing of lambs in the Temple; and at the height of His activity He even used a scourge in defence of the holiness of this house (John ii. 14 ff.; Mark xi. 15).²

There is no doubt that for Israel the Sabbath took second place after the Temple among the religious ordinances. Jesus visited the synagogue regularly on the Sabbath (Luke iv. 16), and He even urged His disciples to pray that their flight should not take place in winter or on the Sabbath (Matt. xxiv. 20).

It was not only in these particulars that Jesus showed respect for existing ordinances. After healing the lepers He expressly charged them to perform the extensive and costly ceremonies required by the law (Luke v. 14; xvii. 14; Lev. xiv. 2, 10, 21); He paid the Temple tax due for Himself (Matt. xvii. 27); He took it for granted that His disciples would continue their sacrifices (Matt. v. 23);

¹ The feast too of Purim, the feast of Tabernacles, and the feast of the Consecration of the Temple.

² Even on those who dared to take a short cut through the Temple carrying a utensil (Mark xi. 16).

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He recognized that the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat (Matt. xxiii. 2); and even in His last days He commended the most exact fulfilment of the Ten Commandments, provided that greater matters were not meanwhile forgotten (Matt. xxiii. 23; Lev. xxvii. 30). He declared definitely and with conviction that He was not come to destroy the law (Matt. v. 17), and that it became Him to fulfil all righteousness (Matt. iii. 15).

We have already emphasized the fact that Jesus was not afraid of a certain ritual. He ate the Passover lamb with such regularity that His disciples merely asked Him, "Where shall we go to prepare?" (Mark xiv. 12). He visited the synagogue so regularly on the Sabbath that His opponents knew they would find Him there. He asked a blessing so habitually at table that His disciples recognized Him by this act (Luke xxiv. 35). He was so accustomed to raise His eyes to heaven when He prayed that He did so even indoors (John xvii. 1). If this Man, who was so strong, did not disdain fixed forms with the secret blessing they bring, how can the weak speak of them so scornfully? He even joined in singing the Hallel with His disciples, though it little suited His frame of mind at the time (Matt. xxvi. 30).

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But there is another entirely different aspect of Jesus' attitude to the religious ordinances of His race. Quite early we find Him visualizing a time when there would be no more Temple but the true worshippers would worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John iv. 21, 23). No Temple in the future! But such a suggestion made it impossible for that age to fulfil the whole law. As for the keeping of the Sabbath, it never hindered or restricted Jesus from doing good wherever it was possible (Luke xiv. 3, 5). In the midst of a generation which disputed whether even consolation might be offered on the Sabbath, it was for Him unthinkable that the command about the Lord's Day should hinder anyone from doing

good (Mark iii. 4; Luke xiii. 16). None of the healing miracles which He performed on the Sabbath was ever solicited, and the patients were never mortally ill. Each time He could easily have told the sick man to return the following day. Yet in Jerusalem on the Sabbath Jesus quite openly went the length of deliberately seeking out the sick (John v. 2 f.). One notices how He persisted in sharply opposing the existing regulations in this matter. He desired to impress upon men for ever, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. xii. 7).

In other places, too, we meet with the same absolute indifference towards all legal precepts which do not serve to ennoble the inner life. Fasting (Mark ii. 18 ff.), washing of hands (Mark vii. 1-23; Luke xi. 38), payment of the Temple tax (Matt. xvii. 24 ff.), holding oneself free from what was considered uncleanness, such as visiting the houses of Gentiles (Matt. viii. 7; Mark vii. 24; Acts xi. 3), touching lepers (Mark i. 41; Lev. xiii. 45 f.), or those with an issue of blood (Mark v. 25, 27; Lev. xv. 9, 25), or corpses (without washing immediately afterwards) (Mark v. 41; Luke vii. 15; Lev. xxii. 4; Num. v. 2; xix. 11-13; Hag. ii. 13)—all these things and many others signified nothing to the real heart of His piety. In the same way, in the contaminating intercourse with publicans and sinners He seemed less strict in the observance of the law than others (Luke vii. 39). Thus, in an age when the law laid the strictest bonds on the most pious, Jesus' actions were marked by a golden liberty—a liberty so great that a few years after His death His followers were inviting the Gentiles in multitudes into His Kingdom, though they had no law.

It is not enough merely to demonstrate that Jesus' attitude towards the legal ordinances of His people was twofold; we must also show how this apparent contradiction found its unity in Him. All His intercourse with

God was spiritual and personal, and so it was impossible for Him to lay any weight on outward forms and means—even on the institution of the Temple itself. As far as ethical questions were concerned, the whole emphasis, according to Him, was to be laid on the intention or purpose involved. *Love* was the one fundamental requirement of the law. Apart from it, all that was mere outward form and ritual dissolved into nothing. Jesus' opposition and resistance were aroused by the fact that there was nothing behind the rules and ceremonies—for instance in the Pharisees' long-inherited custom of fasting, though the heart was not touched by the agony of repentance;¹ or when such external and paltry matters drove what was important and great (such as righteousness and mercy) into the background, or were even put in their place as being of equal importance (Matt. v. 23, the offering of sacrifice instead of reconciliation with one's brother). His anger was aroused, too, when such external matters were laid as a burden and constraint on the spirit (for instance the observance of the Sabbath), depressing instead of uplifting it (having to go hungry on the Sabbath, Mark ii. 23 ff.) and restricting it too (healing on the Sabbath).² In each of these cases Jesus in holy wrath ruthlessly shattered every legal and religious ordinance. In His judgement they lay like a film of ice round the warm inner heart.³

We must go higher still if we wish to express clearly Jesus' attitude to the law. In all His thoughts, words, and actions He knew Himself to be one with God. He could do as He would, for at every moment and with unfailing

¹ The fear, too, of contamination caused by the eating of various foods, if the heart did not learn to keep itself from uncleanness.

² It can even be said that Jesus saw in the Temple a restriction laid on true reverence to God. He realized how such worship would only be liberated from all provincial limitations by the destruction of the Temple (John iv. 21, 23).

³ Luke xiv. 1. Enjoying a Sabbath meal and being able to look on suffering without sympathy (v. 2).

certainly He would be fulfilling the ultimate intention and purpose of the Lawgiver.¹

But this grand and, for that age, quite unheard-of liberty² with regard to the legal ordinances of Israel permitted Jesus to take up at the same time the most conservative attitude. If the outward form were filled with the spirit, why should He seek to destroy it as though it were of little account? The fact that such a proceeding would offend others was enough to keep Him from doing so (Matt. xvii. 27). By the depth of meaning He put in it, He could make great what was little. All His life, therefore, as a true son of His race, He quietly observed its ordinances and customs. As for His disciples, why should He seek to uproot them from the soil in which they had been nurtured? Jesus did not transform outward conditions, it was enough for Him to pierce to the heart of things as they were. If the heart were right, then the expression of its piety—such as in thanksgiving, whether by sacrifice or in some other way—was a matter of indifference. We need not wonder, therefore, that in Matt. v. 23 the disciples' continuation of the sacrificial service is taken for granted. But the internal and the external, as in the practice of fasting (Luke v. 34 f. In the same way Lev. xvi. 29 f.), must balance each other. As long as this is so, as long as the form is genuine, because it is not merely external but internal also, then it may remain. There was nothing revolutionary, nothing violent, and therefore immature, about Jesus. Revolutionaries are like people who remove the outer protective covering of a fruit too early—the fruit dries up and dies. Jesus patiently allowed the fruit

¹ Matt. v. 17. "Fulfil"=perfect, complete, bring to full effect.

² To the Jewish Apocalyptic the Temple was to become once more a world-sanctuary and the law of Moses a universal law. "If," says Philo, "the law enjoys such renown to-day, when Israel has fallen on evil days, to what eminence will it attain when the fortunes of Israel improve?"

to mature, knowing that in time it would itself burst its outer covering.

That is the point, He *knew*. He knew that a time would come when His children would be freed from the Temple tax (Matt. xvii. 26), and how should the Temple then remain? He knew that a time would come when Gerizim and Moriah would no longer be necessary to the true worshippers of God (John iv. 21). He knew, in fact, that in the long run new wine must be put into new bottles (Luke v. 37 f.). He did not only know it, in a sense He began to work for that time. By constantly emphasizing what was great in the law as being the chief matter, He made the lesser part seem of little account (Matt. xxiii. 23). Such a sentence as "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile a man" (Mark vii. 15), is very like a complete breaking away from the old law (Lev. v. 2, 3).

But this was a tremendous thing! There was no idea here of a continuation of development: Jesus appeared rather as the end and goal of the law. Their natural thinking must have led the pious in Israel to a more and more faithful and inward obedience to the law. Jesus' way freed them from the law—and it was a way which could not be found by the natural man. Where did He get the power to do this? The ideal alive in His soul was far in advance of all revealed law (Matt. v. 20); and so He felt it His task to build up a new law, with His mighty "But I say unto you" (Matt. v. 22 f.). For He is the Son of the house, knowing His Father's will, and therefore royally free in His actions, Lord over sacred and inviolate regulations—Lord even of the Sabbath (Mark ii. 28) and the Temple (John viii. 35.)

And so, in this respect also, Jesus cannot be considered only as an example to us.

CHAPTER V

THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS

JESUS' obedience was born out of richness. In religion up till then men had been treated as children whose obedience is obtained by a rod or an apple, fear of punishment and hope of reward being the almost equally potent factors in ensuring obedience to the gods or to God. When they were dealing with divinity, there was always an ulterior motive in men's actions; a man had to look out for himself. We must not shrink from recognizing that Jesus too based nearly all the moral demands He made on His disciples on the idea of reward and punishment in the judgement of God. But such a point of view was wholly alien to His own actions. His obedience needed no auxiliary scaffolding, without which the laboriously erected buildings of others cannot stand. He was not like one who has to keep an eye on the future. Jesus was a Son daily enjoying to the full the love of the Father, and out of this richness, which made the possessor independent for all eternity, there flowed the childlike surrender to the Father as something easy, effortless, and self-evident. Jesus' obedience rested exclusively and immovably on this love to God. He gave it as the reason for His last difficult task "that the world may know that I love the Father" (John xiv. 31). Love was at work in all He did, all His actions were prompted by a desire for God.

As Jesus' obedience flowed from love—out of the pleasure in God who was for Him an *objectum amabile* (object of love)—so His obedience was marked by a constant joyfulness, and as His love was lasting, so His obedience was permanent. This joy in obedience finds its fullest expression in the passage in which He describes the doing of God's will as His "meat" (John iv. 32-34).

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There was in Him nothing of the discord between God and the human will which is so evident in us all. Love turned duty into impulse—"O God, I love to do Thy will." This Man knew nothing of a mere resignation to the will of God, achieved after a hard struggle. To Him it was an inward necessity, a refreshment of the spirit, that God's will should be done. Yes, even in Gethsemane, for in that hour the idea never came to Him that God's will might not be done. He did indeed strive with death, but not for a moment with His God. When He lamented on the Cross that He was forsaken, even then, as we see from the words "*My God,*" He was no impatient doubter, but a believer, bowing Himself in obedience to His God. True, He had to learn obedience, but He learned it with the steadfastness of one abiding always in the love of the Father. Jesus often speaks of a compelling force—"I *must*" (Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 12; xxvi. 54; Luke ix. 44; xii. 50; xxii. 37). But what He was compelled to do He also willed to do. In no moment of His life did disobedience turn to obedience but, looked at as a whole, His entire life was nothing but a wonderful and unbroken confirmation of the Father's will. When one of the disciples tried to hinder His obedience, Jesus rebuked him, calling him Satan, even though Peter was confessing that He was the Messiah (Mark viii. 33; John xviii. 11). All other men have human interests, but He had consecrated His life to God (Mark viii. 33). He desired to fulfil, without any soporific (Mark xv. 23), even this last act of obedience in His life (John xix. 30). As was recently very truly expressed, "'Thy will be done' once walked in living form on the earth, and people called it Jesus."

There is a third observation to be made connected with the fact that Jesus' obedience was grounded in love to God. Where love is at work—for instance, in the relationship between parents and children—it is not so much concerned with one single act, but rather a man gives himself wholly to another and is received by that other wholly. Even his presence can then give happiness.

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Jesus surrendered His whole being in obedience to God, keeping back nothing at all. This was His idea of love; yet this love was completely free in expressing itself. The law is for servants but not for children, whose love gives them a title of nobility, yet, at the same time, lays bonds upon them. For what is more sensitive than love? This Jesus had a wonderful assurance about the will of God. There was nothing uncertain or vacillating in His allegiance to Him. He looked to the Father and the Father "showed" Him His work. Jesus knew every moment what He was to do. This is the understanding that love gives—in its way it makes a much more finely fashioned instrument than our conscience, which often reacts to fear.

* * * * *

In speaking of the obedience of Jesus, we must also look more closely at the actual performance of the work He did. All the joy with which it was accomplished cannot hide its difficulty from us. An apostolic disciple has set the inscription, "Perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10), over the path He trod. At the very outset of His appearance in public He had to undergo Abraham's painful lot—"Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred." To the end the separation from His home and His loved ones bore hard upon Him. Out in the world He was a wanderer, without a spot on earth He could call His own (Luke ix. 58), and He had the experience of being denied a place in the homes of men (Luke ix. 53). He went hungry and thirsty, and had to forego all the little outward amenities of life. That this was not a matter of indifference to Him is clearly seen from His saying about the foxes and birds who were better off than He. Then too there was the burden laid like a heavy shackle on His spirit—ingratitude, disdain, abuse, persecution. At the end of His life both physical and mental suffering reached their zenith, for the first time fully manifesting perfection through suffering. In Plato's

Republic we find the following significant sentences: "So long as a righteous man is accounted as such, gifts and honours will fall to his lot, because he is considered worthy of them. We cannot therefore tell whether he is righteous out of love of righteousness or love of gifts. That his righteousness may be proved, he must be stripped of everything else, and placed in contrasting surroundings." It seems almost as though the fate Jesus had to undergo in the end had been measured out to Him in this way. The Cross was the uttermost in shame and suffering that a man could be called upon to bear,¹ a punishment reserved for slaves, or as a warning to highwaymen and robbers; and this He had to bear after the cruel scourging and other ill-treatment. Yet in those hours the physical torture was not the worst; Jesus' spirit had worse to bear—the faithlessness of His own disciples, the realization that one was lost (John xvii. 12), the brutality of the Jews in their blind rage, the callousness of the Roman soldiers, and, hardest of all for Him who had never lived apart from God, the complete separation from Him, in which He tasted the recompense of the sinner. "Chastisement is precious," says the rabbinical theology. "Rejoice, ye righteous, in your present sufferings," is the message of the apocalyptic book of Baruch. The idea of expiation is evident here—God punishes His people in this world so as to spare them in the world to come. One of our best-known missionaries has said, "I have a real longing to become more lowly and more pure," and such a feeling leads to resignation under chastisement because it is necessary. Both Jewish and Christian thought, each in its own way, links suffering undergone with its own interests, knowing that the suffering must work for good. Jesus did not need suffering for Himself. "He was already purified and closely united to God." For Him the simple,

¹ Piercing of the hands and feet in the tenderest places, painful stretching of the wounded limbs, added to the constriction of the circulation, thirst. Death was always long in coming.

grievous act of obedience was performed "that the world may know I love the Father."

His clear foreknowledge made things still more difficult for Jesus. "May death come quickly. It is terrible to think of it beforehand," says Goethe in one of his tragedies. Jesus had foreseen His death for a long time, and often thought about it; worse still, He foresaw all the horror of it, for He must have known the procedure in crucifixion at the hands of Gentiles. From the Scriptures too He knew the words, "He that is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. xxi. 23). Truly this soul had more to bear than the corn of wheat that falls into the earth and dies!

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Luther once said, "Jesus had to work hard to keep Satan at bay." Jesus Himself often admits how difficult the duty of obedience was for Him (Matt. xxvi. 37 f.; Luke xii. 50; John xii. 27). In what way was He tempted? and what were the temptations of which He Himself speaks? (Luke xxii. 28.)

First of all, He must have had to overcome and subdue the weakness of the flesh. His confession in Gethsemane was taken from His own experience—"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41). He admitted earlier, "How is My spirit straitened," and now that the terrible moment had arrived His heart was doubly wrung. It was, in fact, terrible enough—a strong young human life, in the full tide of years, was to fall a victim to murder, and murder at the hands of men for whom He had lived. Pious men like David (2 Sam. xxiv. 14) and Jesus the son of Sirach (Wisdom ii. 22) had earnestly prayed that they might not fall into the hands of men, but Jesus was called upon to suffer this fate in the bitterest form and, as we may see from the continually fresh emphasis He laid on it, He felt this keenly (Mark ix. 31; x. 33; xiv. 41). Here He had to overcome the weakness of the flesh—although it was no sinful

weakness—the natural will had to be subdued by His higher will.

Another severe temptation was the unreasonableness—according to human views—of the way which the Father led Him. Nurtured in the national spirit of the age, Jesus could not dismiss, as a mere dream, the Messianic likeness as conceived by His people. This false idea of the Messiah was, so to speak, in the air which He breathed, so that it came to Him undesired and unsought. And what task did this lay upon Him? He had to learn to put away what was “human” because His Father demanded of Him what was “divine” (Matt. xvi. 23). But to men this divine idea seemed absurd, and to Jesus’ human sense too it seemed at first unreasonable.

Let me cite just a few examples. First there was Jesus’ attitude to life, and especially the way in which He set up the Kingdom. We think at once of His seemingly unimportant appearance among men. Did not Elias in Zarephath make use of his miraculous powers for his own benefit? (1 Kings xvii. 13). From the story of the temptation in the wilderness we know that Jesus was conscious of this temptation.

Further, there was the absence of every kind of coercion which might have been practised by the glory of His deeds or by miraculous acts of self-preservation. Here again Elias stood like a tempter in the path (2 Kings i. 10). And again we know from the wilderness how Jesus had to defend Himself against this temptation. Was it wise to shun all mere outward and powerful means of advancing His work, such as were offered if He made use of the political Messiahship? Was it the will of God? That was the form in which the third temptation was put (Matt. iv. 9).

Such were the unreasonable ways, according to human sense, which God expected Him to take. We must add to this that the secret of the Kingdom of God was kept hidden from the wise; then the endless tax on His patience, the fact that He was not allowed to make full

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revelation of Himself; that the people were in doubt about Him; and in fact the long path of the suffering servant of God when expectation was on the alert for a king.

There is still a third point to take up if we are to depict fully what made obedience hard for Jesus. On one occasion His lips let fall the cry, "O faithless generation, how long shall I suffer you?" (Mark ix. 19). Incompetence and indolence, ingratitude, mockery, derision, the lowest form of ill-treatment at the hands of men—these tried His patience to the utmost up till the last hours of His life. On one occasion a man accounted one of the greatest of the prophets could not bear the mockery of little children. Yet this Man, with His soul aflame, was called upon to love these people, old enough to know better, to the end. He could not do so without a struggle. Such a course could come easily only to a man of blunted perceptions.

* * * * *

These then were the trials that Jesus' obedience had to meet. But its power of resistance was never broken. This endurance was indeed so immensely great that, as soon as God's will became clear, Jesus immersed Himself in it, making it entirely His own, however difficult it might be.¹ Here are some examples. The revelation of God's patience with sinners made Jesus' path more and more circumscribed. He acquiesced in this patience and even practised it in the same way as His Father. He went the length of rejoicing that the mysteries of God's Kingdom were not revealed to the wise (Luke x. 21); and the ways of setting up the Kingdom of God, so strange to human understanding, were proclaimed by Jesus to the world as great mysteries—among them being the one which He Himself experienced most in His own body, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xxiii. 11). This merging of God's will with His own went so far that we can no longer speak

¹ How little Jeremiah, for instance, accomplished in this respect!

of a mere acceptance, or meek submission or endurance. Instead we see in every case the active execution of a resolution taken in conjunction with the Father, in the weakness of the flesh. Even His mode of life, with its necessitous conditions, was based on His own free choice (Matt. iv. 1 ff.). But we see this above all in the end of His life. He willed to die. That was why He went up to Jerusalem (Matt. x. 32); why He urged Judas to do his work (John xiii. 27); why He went to the garden, so well known to the traitor (John xviii. 2); why He went frankly to meet those who had come to take Him (John xviii. 4); and forbade His disciples to attempt a rescue (John xviii. 11). Truly this is no mere humbling of Himself under the mighty hand of God, but a strong, conscious co-operation with the Father, an inducing of suffering. Suffering—in the consciousness of its higher necessity—becomes here a free act. Passivity is transformed into activity.

When this had taken place the obedience of Jesus had concluded its task, and He died with the triumphant cry on His lips, "It is finished!" (John xix. 30).

PART TWO

IN THE HOLY PLACE

THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PERSONALITY
OF JESUS

(B) JESUS AND MANKIND

CHAPTER I

THE CANDOUR OF JESUS LOVE THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS

IF we follow Jesus into the streets where He walked among men, we are first struck by the truthfulness and candour which He constantly exhibited. He was always Himself, without pose or pretence. He had no love for dark sayings, everything about Him was simple and natural. It is true that there was a majestic dignity in His sincerity and candour; this Man dared to put far from Him every dishonourable means to an end. He knew nothing of what we call opportunism. Even if it might look for a moment as though a crooked way would help Him, He always took the path that went straight forward.

As a man of truth and candour, Jesus was not ashamed of His need. "How I am distressed till it is all over!" (Luke xii. 50, Moffatt). "Tarry ye here and watch with Me" (Matt. xxvi. 38); "I thirst" (John xix. 28); with such words He openly acknowledged His suffering to friends and foes alike. This was not the way adopted by the wisdom of that age. It was not only the ancient Stoics who sought to keep up an appearance of superiority under the blows of fate by declaring, "These things do not affect me." Almost unmercifully Jesus destroyed any such pretence—and not only when He was being buffeted by fate. Would it not have been wiser to have suppressed such admissions as, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man . . . not even the Son" (Mark xiii. 32); "To sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give"? (Matt. xx. 23). Who could have blamed Him had He done so? Would it not have been better if He had not been able to say of Himself, "I am the truth"? (John xiv. 6). But Jesus was incapable of dishonesty; His spirit was as limpid as a mountain rill.

One who knows what he is talking about has told us that though heathen people have many virtues a love of truth is rarely one of them. This Jesus, who would have had His disciples give up altogether the use of swearing (Matt. v. 34), commanding them to let their yea be yea and their nay nay, demanded nothing of them that He did not Himself practise daily.

A dark cloud of lying forms of politeness always dims our own truthfulness. We are accustomed to be circumspect, we assert that "certain things are not said." Jesus was unmercifully candid; sometimes He seemed to be almost unreasonably so, as when, for instance, He gave the publicans and harlots precedence over the scribes and Pharisees in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. xxi. 31); or told the respectable Nicodemus that he must begin a new and higher life, which he had hitherto failed to live (John iii. 4). The world bows down before power and money; but watching the widow give her mite, and the wealthy, avaricious Pharisee beside her, Jesus daringly awarded the palm to the former (Mark xii. 43). On two bright days of His life He discovered in a village of Samaria that the Samaritans believed His words alone, without demanding miracles (John iv. 41 f.); and at another time it was a Samaritan who returned to thank Him while nine Jews failed to do so (Luke xvii. 16). After that all the cries about "the mad people of Sichem" could not hinder Him from displaying the courage of truth, and in a parable (Luke x. 33) placing the Samaritan above the Jewish priest and Levite, because He had a higher opinion of the former. He knew that "salvation is of the Jews" and that the Samaritans worshipped they knew not what (John iv. 22), yet He frankly told the Samaritan woman that a time would come when the Father would be no more worshipped either in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerizim (John iv. 21). Yes, He was true through and through, speaking aloud what all the world agrees to cover with silence.

Without any doubt He had a burning desire to win many people to Himself, yet He was too honest to make discipleship seem easy. "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head"—that was the warning He gave a rich man who wished to become His follower (Matt. viii. 20). It would have seemed to Him falsehood had He tried to make light of the hardships which awaited those who became His disciples.

Not even in His parables did Jesus ever swerve an inch from truth and reality. He took the world as it was, never depicting men as angels. He knew how the labourers who are hired first are filled with envy when they see the others who have begun to work later in the day taking the same wage home with them (Matt. xx. 11); and that impudent importunity will often succeed when professed friendship fails (Luke xi. 8). And because He knew these things He painted them as they are, without alteration.

Thoughtful readers of the Gospel have sometimes wondered whether Jesus was always just in His treatment of the Pharisees: were they really so bad that He must always disparage their profession? It was only His sense of truth that led Him to take up this fateful attitude towards them. The position of the publicans was clear enough, but the Pharisees *appeared* to be the servants of God, and yet He saw how all their service was done in their own interest (Matt. xxiii. 6, 7). They appeared to be zealous, but He saw that they were satisfied with doing as little as possible. Then it was that Jesus, with His passion for truth, flamed into denunciation of pretence. Better to hide from men what was private and holy than to have this hypocritical outward show covering dead men's bones (Matt. xxiii. 27).

Even His enemies at last recognized His truthfulness (Matt. xxii. 16); and His favourite disciple, remembering all the glory he had witnessed, confesses that it was full of truth (John i. 14). It is true that this confession has a still higher meaning, but we are doing no wrong in making

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use of it at this point as a testimony to the unalterable truthfulness and sincerity of Jesus.

Jesus' glory was still greater in that quality which John puts before truth in the passage just quoted. It was full of mercy (John i. 14). In Jesus the sun of love rose in the heavens and shed its rays over the whole world. Let us try to catch some of these with our spiritual eyes.

Jesus was the first to set forth the connection between love to God and love to one's neighbour: two commandments, yet the second just as great as the first (Matt. xxii. 38 f.). Daily and hourly He practised what He preached. While He was among men He had constant intercourse with God; for to Him men were His Father's children, and the Father had given them to Him. If all His actions towards them were those of service, such service of men was for Him service of God—that is, a form, if not exactly *the* form, in which He could serve the invisible God. Service of men—service of God—in those days love to men was given the rank of nobility which it has never since lost.

For the first time in the world there took place a quite unheard-of revaluation of all values; and we can never go back—at least for any length of time—to things as they were before then. From that time onwards true greatness lay not in ruling but in serving. "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be the servant of all" (Mark x. 44). For "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matt. xx. 28). The world still holds positions of rank, and Jesus claims them for Himself (Matt. xxiii. 8, 10). But the claim is made valid by service. Up till that time there was something shameful about service, it was a melancholy fate laid like a yoke on the shoulders of those of low estate: service was a matter for slaves. But since then it has become a privilege of the most enviable kind. Not the sort of service which the world has used here and there as a means of lording

it over others, but the simple service which finds happiness in being insignificant and helpful. From what He said we can see that Jesus was fully conscious of the contrast here to the ideals which had held good up till then (Matt. xx. 25 f.; John xiii. 34). In this regard Jew and Greek were alike; prosperity, honour, reputation, success, and power took a foremost place among the things for which the Jew strove. For the Greek the ideal was the liberty of the free man, who finds in the mastery of others the realization of his ego. Even the Stoic brewed himself a marvellous compound of self-renunciation and self-seeking. Jesus accomplished an unheard-of revaluation of values; intellect, beauty and strength, wealth, power and reputation were no longer the things to be sought after, but humility and lowliness, and servitude freely undertaken. The world has listened to this with astonishment and wonder ever since. But the wisdom and the justification of this revelation can be felt and proved. And ultimately even the noblest among the kings have bowed themselves under this rule by confessing themselves to be the servants of their subjects.

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The rising sun of love which we see in Jesus had an ardent glow—one might almost call it a consuming heat. He never thought of Himself, but always of others. Everyone else is concerned, at least partly, with himself, desiring to be and do something in the world, to succeed in life. But for this Jesus, service was the one purpose of existence. He came only for the sake of others (Matt. xx. 28). That was why His sympathy was so easily aroused. Physical and spiritual need alike moved Him with compassion—indeed, He looked on both with the same eyes (Matt. ix. 36 f.; xiv. 14). He was always moved by the sight of tears (Luke vii. 13; viii. 52; John xi. 33; xx. 15); His compassionate spirit found the appeal in every child of man. The misery of mankind laid hold of Him; He allowed His feelings to become intense and

in His actions His heart was aflame. Even Confucius, the highly praised, agrees with Tobias (Tobit iv. 15) in giving it as his carefully considered opinion, "Do unto no man what thou wouldst not have him do unto thee," thus advising a justice which gives to everyone his due without self-sacrifice. Whereas the chief principle underlying Jesus' actions was what He preached without hesitation, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. vii. 12), although He knew well that the desires of men for themselves are without limit.

Though He was a stranger to the world, withdrawn, misunderstood, preferring to be alone with His God, His love was so strong that it transformed Him into a Man hungering for intercourse with others, ready to seek a link with every man. With Him love was never a sentimental emotion; His actions were never prompted by the desire to have the pleasant consciousness that He was leading a life of self-sacrifice. Such a weak, effeminate trait was very far removed from His character. His love was inflexible will, action, and service. There was in Him a tremendously *active* love, which often threatened to consume Him by its ardent glow. There was no consideration of self in it. Night was turned into day when Nicodemus visited Him (John iii. 2); weariness was forgotten in His conversation with the simple Samaritan woman (John iv. 6), and even the need of food and drink (John iv. 31; Mark iii. 20).

Such living for others will always remain incomprehensible to the natural sense; we can therefore readily understand how Jesus was once declared to be mad for that very reason (Mark iii. 21). But He had found His security in God and, anchored there, He unhesitatingly transferred the centre of gravity from Himself to others. This loving without reserve, this wonderful completeness of love which threatened to consume its subject, had never been seen in the world before; and Jesus could say to His followers without exaggeration, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved

you" (John xiii. 34), and, as we may add, in imitation of Him, as only those children of men can love who have entered with Jesus into the great inheritance of the firstborn Brother.

But there is another sense in which the example of His love gave to Jesus' followers an entirely new commandment. Through Him love lost its local limitations. "Man is a wolf to the unknown man," said the Roman proverb, and the Jew's standpoint did not go much further, for his idea of his neighbour stopped short at the borders of his own country. If love to his compatriot was demanded by the law, he compensated himself for this by a deep hatred of the stranger. Jesus replied to the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbour?" by saying, Do not spend your time wondering how near a neighbour a man may be, but earn for yourself the name of neighbour from all those who seek your help; and this single answer (Luke x. 36) gives us a profound view into the boundlessness of His love. Jesus does for all what we are willing to do only for those of our immediate circle; He is ready to be everyone's neighbour.

The rabbinical exegesis of Zech. ix. 10 showed the Messiah to be harsh towards other nations, tender towards Israel. It was undecided whether He would destroy the other nations or bring them under His rule. Only here and there did the idea arise that in the days of the Messiah the nations might turn to Judaism. But how far the love of Jesus soared above such views when He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring"! (John x. 16). On that day love lost its national restrictions.

Then again, this boundless love of Jesus was altogether free from indefinite vagueness or bombastic phrases, such as, Greetings to the wide world! but descended directly and continuously on individuals. That is why, while the speeches of other people have been recorded, we hear

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more about the conversations of Jesus. The gems of His sayings come from His intercourse with individual people. He had time for everyone; He never seemed to be pressed; He stopped beside beggars who called to Him (Luke xviii. 40); He did not even begrudge the tedious conversation by signs with the man who was deaf and dumb (Mark vii. 33). And yet at the same time His love was extended to the whole world. In those days the paternal ear and heart of God were made credible for ever.

In his famous hymn of love, which is nothing less than a word-portrait of the person of Jesus, Paul says, "Love believeth all things, hopeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7). But where did Paul find in Jesus this hopeful faith of love? Jesus had a high opinion of and respect for men because He believed in their future. Man's nobility lies not in what he is but in what he may become. Jesus was the first to teach us that "the soul of every poor wretch, every rascal and blockhead should have the same metaphysical value as that of Michelangelo or Beethoven." Thus He believed all things and hoped all things. That was how He could love as He did and yet not die of a broken heart.

If we turn to the miracles of Jesus we enter territory over which His love alone held sway. Why did He perform His miracles? There are of course various correct answers to this. Without doubt He sought to arrest people's attention and to persuade them to listen to Him. Once He had got His audience He was often concerned that the business of healing should not take up time necessary for teaching, and His miracles were relegated to the background (Matt. ix. 28).¹ John, too, is surely right in calling them "signs" (John ii. 11; xx. 30), that is, actions which were to be symbols of happenings in the mental and spiritual life. Yet there is no doubt that, above all, it was the love of Jesus that found its triumphant culmina-

¹ First the blind men received their sight indoors, and then were forbidden to speak about it.

tion in the miracles, experiencing in them satisfaction, rest, and comfort. Origen rightly points out that Jesus' miracles were far superior to those of pagan miracle-workers because they were not mere magic but always served a moral purpose. In brief, they served His love, and in doing so were bound up in a quite peculiar fashion with the essence of His personality. The evangelists describe His daily work by saying that He healed and taught (Matt. iv. 23; ix. 35; Luke v. 15, 17). There is a profound inner connection between the misery of disease and the misery of sin; physical and spiritual need cannot be separated in this world, and Jesus always had compassion on both. It was the meaning of His mission that He took both upon Himself. It is in the two professions of the teacher and the physician that love approaches closest to those who are of small account in the world. And as He healed and taught, His glory became visible to all, a glory which was full of both mercy and truth.¹

A modern historian has assured us that power is always a bad thing. If ever there was a man in history who might have been inclined to play a big rôle, it was this Jesus. His power was so great that there lay in it a boundless temptation to forget that the meaning of life is service. What kind of predecessors had He? Moses, Elias, Jeremiah, and all the rest of them used their power to serve their own ends on occasion—to revenge themselves and to enhance their own importance. What about those who came after Him? Even Peter and Paul, irritated and impatient, fell into the old ways again (Acts v. 9; xiii. 11). But all Jesus' power, always and without exception, was put at the service of divine love, and even on the last night He would not allow that a man should be injured because of Him (Luke xxii. 51).

It is true that the majority of Jesus' miracles were those of healing, but the reason for this was that it was almost

¹ In a letter to his father Livingstone wrote, "God had an only Son who became a missionary and a doctor. I am a poor, poor imitation of Him, or try to be so."

always for sick people that His aid was sought. When this was not the case, He unexpectedly exhibited His supernatural power in other directions—in feeding the people in the wilderness, in the storm on the lake, at the wedding in Cana, in the house of mourning. Yet it was always in its desire to serve that His love urged Him on; His miracles were never performed as a mere manifestation of power.

We have said that His miracles were governed by love, and there is one point at which its warm radiance is particularly evident. We mean His physical contact with sick people. In that age a deaf-and-dumb man was more an object of horror than of pity. Aristotle, who had a deeper understanding of nature than many, could still say, "The deaf and dumb are incapable of human culture." Those who came to plead with Jesus for a deaf-and-dumb man may often have been his tormentors, and so Jesus "took him aside" (Mark vii. 33). The poor man should not be disturbed and frightened by faces that he knew; he should see only the compassionate eyes of Jesus and feel His kindly touch. This reminded him of his affliction, while the "looking up to heaven" reminded him that from thence help comes (v. 34).

The Hebrews regarded a leper as one smitten (by God) and, if he were cured, sin-offerings were required. He was thrust out of society, so that others should not become unclean; there was, too, the justified fear of infection as well as the natural feeling of repulsion. It must have been like a warm ray of sunlight to such people when Jesus touched them, in the kindness of His heart and without fear.

It is said to be no small effort to members of the white races to touch a black man. And yet how much it may mean to the latter! The well-known authoress of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reveals this to us again and again out of her own experience. That is why, with profound understanding, she notes repeatedly the significance of Jesus touching sick folk. We can understand what this loving

touch must have meant to the blind man who could not see Jesus' kindly eyes; to the deaf-and-dumb man to whom His friendly voice could not penetrate. And we can realize, too, how the parents' hearts must have been touched when Jesus affectionately took the cold hand of their little dead maid in His (Mark v. 41); for it was an age in which contact with a corpse made even a sacred thing unclean. And so, in this way too, Jesus' love celebrated its triumph in His miracles.

From miracles we turn to prophecy, and again we find that love was the power which alone moved Jesus to prophesy. This had not been the case in earlier times. Often enough the prophets of the old covenant foretold with flaming eyes the approaching punishment of their opponents, animated by personal irritation or with the purpose of laboriously upholding their own reputation. Jesus prophesied the downfall of the city which murdered the prophets, but with tears (Luke xix. 41); and for many within its walls His were words of helpful warning. If we think of the disciples, we see how every word of prophecy Jesus uttered to them was permeated with faithful love. Why did He speak to them so often of His approaching suffering? Surely that when the incredible had come to pass they should not be irreparably offended in Him. Rather were they to find support then in what He had foretold: He knew it was to be, now they were to find out for themselves the meaning of it (John xiii. 19). It was for the same reason that He often spoke to them of the fall of the Temple: His love saw to it that they should make their escape in time (Mark xiii. 14 ff.). Or, when He spoke to them about His Second Coming, His love was trying to comfort them and bid them be on the watch (Mark xiii. 28 ff., 33, 36). All His prophecies might be called acts of the most detailed and individual endeavour to care for the souls of men. Peter was not saved from falling by Jesus' prediction (Matt. xxvi. 31); but

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afterwards one glance from His eyes was enough to help the disciple to retrace his steps (Luke xxii. 61). It is true that the eleven disciples deserted Him and fled, but they knew beforehand that they would be allowed to find their way back to Him (Matt. xxvi. 31). Thus each of Jesus' prophecies was a manifestation of His love.

* * * * *

It is necessary for us to realize how, in other respects too, all that Jesus said was governed and measured by love. In dealing with crowds and with individuals, how His love sought for exactly the right word! The form of His speech was very varied according to whether it was addressed to the disciples, the people, or the Pharisees—now didactic, now gracious, now like a storm. One can hardly believe it is the same Man speaking to the Samaritan woman (John iv) and to Simon the Pharisee (Luke vii. 36 ff.), or to the governor, Pilate (John xviii and xix). He was careful never to say too much and never too little. In each individual situation His love felt its way into the atmosphere and the train of thought. His language was adapted not to Himself or His own knowledge but always to the man with whom He was talking, and He took his measure by his ability to understand (John iii. 12). At the beginning He carefully refrained from telling the disciples all that they must eventually know—for instance, the confession of His Messiahship and the necessity for His suffering—and even on the evening before His death His love kept silence about many things, because His followers were not able to bear them (John xvi. 12). On the other hand, from the days of Caesarea Philippi onwards, He was never tired of repeating many things which were not understood, such as the announcement of His suffering—so far as it was necessary for His disciples to comprehend it—impressing it on them by exact and similar-sounding phrases (Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 22; xx. 18), so that when the time came the seeds He had sown in their memory should bear fruit. The fact, too, that the idea

of reward is so often evident, and that He continually and clearly depicted the recompense that would be theirs, is just a concession His love made to the weak. For Himself the thought of reward never played the slightest part in any moment of His life, but for His followers it was important as an alleviation, especially when He was demanding something difficult of them.

The love which governed all His feeling led of course to the whole gamut of irony, mockery, and satire being excluded from His speech. Old Elijah on Mount Carmel mocked the prophets of Baal (1 Kings xviii. 27) and there are satirical tones in Isaiah (Isa. xlv. 12-19; lviii. 5).¹ Kierkegaard gives it as his opinion that satire is justified as a weapon only in moral indignation, but that in such a case it is necessary. Yet the bite of satire is never without uncharitableness, too often bearing traces of personal irritation and bitterness; and so Jesus never made use of it when He spoke.

Yet there is one quite peculiar and clearly marked habit in His speaking which we must now look at. Love seems to laugh aloud in this practice of His. We refer to His radiant parables. It was indeed love that made Him talk so simply and frankly in the language of the people—sometimes He liked to talk in contrasts, sometimes taking such an obviously one-sided view of a subject that the people could declare it to be unbounded exaggeration, now expressing Himself so quaintly that they would laugh at what He said. What did He care how they laughed or mocked so long as they were awakened out of their slumber! But the parables were the best that His love could create in speech. They are indeed love's masterpiece. The difficult subject of the Kingdom of Heaven was disguised in the incidents of the streets and of everyday life, and thus put into a form that a child could grasp. Here is another subject which, if openly declared, would have made the people turn away from Jesus in dis-

¹ The satirical description of those who fasted. Though the passage lay before Him Jesus omitted the satirical trait (Matt. vi. 16).

appointment at once (Mark iv. 34); but without diluting it He concealed the meaning in such a way that even the crowd received the revelation calmly. Here such a puzzling but intriguing metaphor is given to a serious thought that the people are provoked into thinking out the deep meaning behind it, and asking for an explanation. Here are mysteries which tend to remain almost entirely hidden even to the disciples for the time being, a good part of which could not be fully explained until the far future, when success should have destroyed their previous ideal of the Kingdom of God, and these were impressed on their memory in a form which made them unforgettable. Yes, and here the reason is ultimately revealed why God's Kingdom has to come in a particular way—because there are laws of life and nature, the compelling force of which can be daily observed in other regions. It is said that Jesus loved to speak in parables. I am not sure if the expression is a happy one. At any rate He never strove after any aesthetic ideal even in the most beautiful of them; He was only concerned with their practical effect. But it is certain that a great condescension lay in this form of speech. He Himself saw the spiritual world very clearly, but He stepped down among men and spoke to them, not in the way in which He thought, but in the way they thought, often painting His pictures in magnificent colours so that they might attract people. Thus the parables stand in the first rank as a monument to His love.

The great majority of people can be taught by illustration. That was why Jesus' love went even further than illustration by parable. He asks to be shown a tribute penny (Matt. xxii. 19); He places a child in their midst (Matt. xviii. 2); He points to the lilies of the field and the birds in the air (Matt. vi. 26, 28); to the fishermen's net in the lake (Matt. xiii. 47); to the sower in his field (Matt. xiii. 3), using them all as instructive illustrations. This illustrative form expanded into symbolical actions. The disciples were to learn that the greatest among them should be the servant of all, and Jesus takes an

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apron and a basin and washes their feet (John xiii. 14); they are to know that He must die, and He takes the bread that symbolizes His body and breaks it before their eyes; He is to die for them, and He hands them the broken bread that they may eat it (Matt. xxvi. 26); they are to know where He will be, that He is going to the Father in heaven, and so He disappears heavenwards before their gaze (Acts i. 9). All the words about His death remained misapprehended, but here love, with its inventive art, found the means whereby the comprehension of His death was assured for all time—for you!

Wherever we look, we see the same picture—a love that condescended to those who could not understand.

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“How tender hast Thou been to me,” sings Tersteegen in one of his loveliest hymns. We should be guilty of an omission if we did not follow up the idea suggested here—the tenderness of Jesus’ love. That we may comprehend it, let us first enter into the banqueting hall of Simon the Pharisee, along with a frightened woman who slips through the door. She falls down at Jesus’ feet, weeps over them, dries them again with her hair, and then anoints them with the ointment she has brought with her. Every man in the room believes he has a right to treat this woman with disdain; hard words about her are heard on every side. But Jesus treats her with the greatest consideration. He does not speak to her, either in instruction or praise, for that would confuse and excite her still more. He speaks about her, and thus she learns to understand herself. So taken up is she with her sorrow and her joy, that perhaps she does not hear what He is telling the others about the two debtors. How gently He reminds Simon that he too is a debtor before God even though he may be ten times better than this woman! How she lifts her head when His question, “Seest thou this woman?” suddenly makes her the focus of all eyes! He does not say

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to her harshly and severely, Her great love shows Me that she is a sinner, but instead, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven" (Luke vii. 36-48).

At Jacob's Well Jesus met a woman of not much better character, whose dark past lay clearly before His eyes (John iv. 18). Should He confound her with it? It was not His way to lay hold of the human soul by violence. First He tried another method.

Again, there was the return of the disciple who had denied Him. No word was said of what had taken place. All that He did to remind Peter of his denial was to ask him three separate times, "Lovest thou Me?" (John xxi. 17), and, still more clearly reminding him of what had happened earlier, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (John xxi. 15; Matt. xxvi. 33).¹

It was only by repeating the doubter's own words that Jesus rebuked Thomas (John xx. 27). The elderly man who had lain ill for thirty-eight years at the Pool of Bethesda was reminded of his early sin only after he had been cured, and when he was alone with Jesus (John v. 14). Even the traitor was spared, and his identity revealed only to the beloved disciple (John xiii. 26). On every occasion we see the same tenderness in His love.

In visiting sick folk it was the same. We know how roughly the prophets dealt with their kings when they were ill (2 Kings xx. 1; i. 6); the severity of the preacher did not halt at the door of the sickroom. Jesus, too, realized the connection between sin and punishment, for instance in the man possessed of devils, but what He always proffered was compassion, sympathy, and boundless love.

A radiance must have emanated from His person, a radiance of great kindness and goodness. He took a child and placed it in the midst of a number of excited men. How kindly He must have been, or the child would have cried all the time! (Matt. xviii. 2). We see it still more

¹ Zinzendorff reckoned out that, according to the canons of the Church composed later for penitents, Peter would have had to kneel before the church door for at least fifteen years.

clearly in another incident. The children had just been rebuked by the disciples, whom they did not know, but immediately afterwards they were sitting on Jesus' knee and nestling up against Him, though He too was a stranger to them (Mark x. 13, 16). We hear the tenderness in His voice, too, when He calls the disciples "children" (Mark x. 24; John xiii. 33), or those who came running to Him with their petitions—"My son," "My daughter" (Matt. ix. 2, 22). He must have spoken the names of those dear to Him in a way different from any other, for on Easter morning the scales fell from the Magdalene's eyes when she heard His voice call her Mary (John xx. 16). He knew that He had shed the sunshine of gladness on His followers and so He did not hesitate to say that His were the days of the bridegroom (Matt. ix. 15). In the days of the Psalmist, weeping with those that weep was considered a virtue (Ps. xxxv. 13); but six days before His death Jesus took part in the happy reunion between the three members of the family at Bethany, rejoicing with them—a difficult art to the race which, as Kant says, could rejoice in the misfortune of their best friend.

He knew what the desire of every man was—the stranger wished for a shelter, the prisoner and the sick a visitor (Matt. xxv. 35 f.), the publicans and sinners that an honourable man should sit at table with them (Matt. ix. 10). A radiant affection accompanied His every step. Judas betrayed Him with a kiss; He reproached Simon, saying, "Thou gavest Me no kiss" (Luke vii. 45); the ancient practice of combining a greeting with a kiss later became a Christian custom (1 Cor. xvi. 20; 1 Pet. v. 14; Rom. xvi. 16); and from all these facts we may judge that this form of salutation was a habit with Jesus, and that He valued an embrace from others.¹ The apostle was copying his Master's example when he wrote, "Be kindly affectioned [tender] one to another with brotherly love" (Rom. xii. 10).

¹ Cf., too, the meeting between the father and the prodigal son (Luke xv. 20).

But we have not yet said all there is to say about the tenderness of Jesus' love. Those who were eye-witnesses of His life received the impression that He would not quench the smoking flax (Matt. xii. 20). With what kindly, encouraging words He recognized and praised the feeble beginnings of faith (Matt. viii. 10; xv. 28; xvi. 17 ff.), little proofs of love (Mark xiv. 6 ff.; Luke xxii. 28 f.), the slightest tendency towards goodness (Luke vii. 41; xv. 29, 31; both times a description of the Pharisees). How mildly and indulgently He excused the Twelve when they plucked the ears of corn (Matt. xii. 1 f.), the fasting disciples of John (Luke v. 39), the doubting Baptist (Matt. xi. 7 f.), and even the unjust Pilate (John xix. 11). It was in the tenderness of His love that He sent out the disciples in couples (Mark vi. 7; xiv. 13; Luke x. 1; Matt. xxi. 1), and forbade them to hurt the feelings of their host by changing from one house to another where they might perhaps be more comfortable (Luke x. 7).

It was tenderness that made Him urge them to rest when they returned from their first journey (Mark vi. 31). There is often a great sensitiveness to be found in humble folk. The great ones of the earth, with their heads full of ideas, plans, and projects, take things more easily. Those who look closely will see that this Man, who carried the fortunes of the world on His heart and whose eyes could see so far, had yet a wonderful tenderness for all who came in contact with Him.

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There was something heroic, too, about Jesus' love. On eagle's wings it bore Him to a height which no man had ever reached before: He loved His enemies. The suggestion that a man should love his enemies had been heard of before; but anyone making such a demand always looked at it from his point of view, attempting to defend himself against insult by disdaining it, or trying to make it bearable by all sorts of worldly wise maxims—that, in a certain sense, the enemy was his greatest friend; or that

one might conquer him by heaping coals of fire on his head. It was easy enough to forgive an enemy when he lay on the ground at one's feet, easy, too, for the pious man who held his peace and left the matter to God (Ps. xxxvii. 7-10), perhaps with a secret cry for revenge. But in every case there was a fear that in forgiving an enemy one might be giving oneself away, as well as the desire to hold one's place in the world—truly a difficult enough matter for one entangled in mundane affairs. Jesus completely changed the inner centre of gravity. As He faced His enemy He no longer asked, How shall I save Myself from harm? but, How shall I save him from harm? And the answer was twofold—by complete forgiveness and by intercessory prayer to God. This was not merely the heroic perfection of Jesus' own person, but real compassion for the enemy. Jesus was far above the desire for revenge, and He demanded the same attitude from His followers (Matt. v. 44). Though He loved righteousness, He strove to find some excuse for His enemies, so long as it did not offend against the truth. "Father . . . they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). Ever since the days of the change of fortune in Galilee, nearly all His love, as we see if we examine it closely, was love to His enemies, the most kindly compassion towards them. "Love?" cried the unhappy quadroom in Legree's house (*Uncle Tom's Cabin*), "we should love our enemies? Flesh and blood cannot do such a thing." This is certainly true, but that was the masterpiece of the peculiar glory of His love.

Suffering will blight any blossom, and many a tender flower put forth by love has been cruelly trodden underfoot. But it was through suffering that the whole force of Jesus' love was first revealed. The disciple who lay on His breast cried out in astonishment, "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). Yes, unto the end! His mind was not

concerned with His own troubles to the exclusion of everything else, as one might have supposed; they did not make Him cold towards others, but rather had the effect of an east wind blowing on fire—His love flamed up as never before, becoming a servant to the glory of His love. There was a garden into which Jesus entered with His disciples. And as He climbed the Mount of Olives where it lay, He forgot His own fate which was to be accomplished there, and thought only of His disciples—"All ye shall be offended because of Me this night" (Mark xiv. 27). Then he spoke particularly with Peter, so that after his terrible fall the disciple might more easily rise again. Under the olive-trees of the garden His need reached its extremity. But again He did not forget the Eleven, and three times He went to warn and remind them, as they lay heavy with sleep, that in this dreadful night they should keep their minds clear by prayer (Mark xiv. 38). When Jesus was taken prisoner Peter injured one of the servants, but hardly had He seen the injury when He healed it, though it was He they were pursuing so relentlessly (Luke xxii. 51). Then He gave Himself up, but at the last He spread His hands protectingly over the Eleven (John xviii. 8). When He stood shrouded, derided, taunted between the soldiers in the court of the high priest, surely He might have thought of Himself. But His eyes searched through the hall until they found the corner where a coal-fire glowed, and He helped Peter with a single glance (Luke xxii. 61). He did not rebuke the rude churl who struck Him in the face before the assembled court, but tried to make him see his fault (John xviii. 23). He gently reminded the Roman governor, boasting of his power, of the One above who was mightier still, but at the same time sought to take some of the responsibility from him (John xix. 11). When He saw the weeping women, He did not think of His own fate, but was filled with pity for them (Luke xxiii. 28). And when they crucified Him and He experienced the dreadful torture of the pierced, wracked limbs, the arrested circulation, and

the agony of thirst, it was as though He hung there out of pure love: first He prayed for His torturers (Luke xxiii. 34), then He cared for His mother (John xix. 26), and at last He more than abundantly comforted a poor rogue, with a gift such as kings bestow (mercy; Luke xxiii. 43).

If we can realize it all we can understand John's jubilant cry, "He loved unto the end!" And that not while being tenderly nursed and shown a thousand touching demonstrations of love, such as others experience in their last hours, but while He was being shamefully treated even by His own followers. In spite of it all He loved unto the end!

In those days the love of Jesus accomplished the greatest thing it had to do. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It was not the first time that a man had voluntarily given up his life. But in such cases life was laid down for someone or something loved and valued—it was the heroic deed of a mother devoted to her child, or of a man who gave up his life for his country. And generally the risk was taken in the hope that there might still be an escape from the threatening danger. But Jesus laid down His life for a hostile world that had treated Him cruelly and to which He owed no gratitude; for a strange world to which He had really been as alien as it was to Him; for a humanity which might well have disgusted Him by its pettiness and vulgarity, its baseness and spitefulness. Nor was there the slightest chance that in risking His life He might save it. Rather He knew exactly how bitter and hard it would be for Him on the tree of shame. And yet He surrendered Himself! It was then that His love experienced its coronation.

We know that Jesus designated service as the purpose of His advent. When doing so He added in the same breath, "And to give My life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). He knew that in giving up His life He

was consummating His service to the world. He paid the price it could not pay. That day on Golgotha the commandment of the old covenant, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," was freed from its second and last restriction. Jesus had already deprived the idea of "neighbour" of its narrow meaning, giving to it a far wider one; but now the half-hearted words "as thyself" were expanded for eternity into the flaming "more than thyself." Even justifiable self-love can be made to yield to the duty of self-denial. Thus it was made clear how right Jesus was when He previously declared, "A new commandment give I unto you"—a commandment that the world had never known before.

This has spread a wide field before our view, and everything in it is irradiated with the sunshine of warmest love. Later on Paul said that "love is the bond of perfectness" (Col. iii. 14), and we can understand^{vi} now where he learned to know that—he had seen it^{vi} in the Nazarene.

But we have not yet said everything about the love of this Man. There are three more places in this field where we may still glean.

CHAPTER II

THE HUMILITY AND PATIENCE OF JESUS

It is clear that Jesus' humility was not only the companion of His love, though it is seen in its most glorious light in this connection. Remember how, in innumerable cases, Jesus' truthfulness and candour provided ample ground for the nourishment of His humility. This Jesus never tried to appear stronger than He really was; He frankly lamented His need (Matt. xxvi. 38; xxvii. 46); told of His temptations (Matt. iv. 3 ff.); was grateful for succour given Him (Luke xxii. 28); and openly admitted His physical and spiritual exigencies (Matt. xi. 29; John viii. 50). Neither did He desire to know or do anything beyond what His Father had entrusted Him with, and He spoke without restraint of the barriers which had been set by God, even when others would gladly have given Him credit for greater things (Matt. iii. 14). There was never any sign of boasting or ostentation. In fact, Jesus would not have needed to be so humble had He not been so truthful.

Yet His humility was rooted deeper than this. He was a man quite unconcerned with His own worth. When He said, "I am meek and lowly in heart, I seek not My own glory" (Matt. xi. 29; John viii. 50), these were no idle words. Even in His baptism He, the head of the Kingdom, did not wish to be treated differently from His compatriots, even thus early in His career desiring to share the fate of sinners (Matt. iii. 14 f.). Later on He humbly took what was given Him (Luke viii. 3; John xii. 6), never considering as Paul did (1 Cor. ix. 15) what effect such an attitude might have on His own position. In His humility He did not care whether He was acknowledged as the Messiah or not, if only people should find salvation in His Messiahship. It was for this reason that for years

He refrained from any open revelation of Himself, until such time as it would be a blessing (Matt. xvi. 13, 20).

In the Kaddish prayer, so highly revered in the synagogue, and which was probably in use in Jesus' time, the petition for the hallowing of God's name precedes that for the coming of God's Kingdom. And very probably Jesus purposely linked the Lord's Prayer in this way with the ancient sacred prayer of the race, and did not shrink from incorporating echoes of it, well known and popular as it was, into the one He gave us for a pattern. In the same way, the first words He used after the resurrection were just the usual form of greeting (John xx. 19; Judges vi. 23; xix. 20, etc.).

The designation of His disciples as "apostles" was also nothing unusual. The name was just as common as that of servant (John xiii. 16), and use had also made current the word "messenger." Thus we see no trace of any striving after originality, but in everything the attitude of a really humble man. Mohammed was always careful of his appearance, taking a mirror, comb, scissors, oil and eye-cream with him wherever he went. The vanity of Buddha peeps through the rags of his beggar's cloak. This Jesus moved humbly about in the unaffected guise of ordinary folk, going in and out among them and living in close touch with the people. He knew nothing of the complacent privacy indulged in by the proud—*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* (I hate the common people and keep them far from me).

In many cases the great English poet is right when he says, "Lowliness is young ambition's ladder." But Jesus, in His humility, really never did think of Himself. Had He done so, how differently He would have acted. Think of what He might have achieved by His deeds alone. But just because He did not desire to attain anything for Himself He never dazzled people by His deeds (Matt. iv. 6), but performed them quietly, so that only so much should be noised abroad as would attract people to Him (Matt. xii. 15). He never taught His disciples to

admire, honour or fête Him. He had no wish for it, and they did not dare to do so. In the hours of quiet self-examination He certainly never thought of Himself but only of the greatness of His responsibility. How impossible it would have been for Jesus to hold up a mirror to Himself as Frederick the Great did when, conscious of his approaching death, he wished "to leave the world loaded with his favours." After the moment when His consciousness of self reached its highest pitch (Matt. xvi. 17-19) Jesus took refuge in seclusion (v. 20), for He did not wish to appear great even among His own disciples. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how He must suffer" (v. 21). Well did He know Judas (John vi. 70), and He could have got rid of him, thus avoiding the terrible ignominy of being betrayed by one of His own followers. But neither in this nor in any other case was He concerned with His own dishonour.

Socrates treated his judges with disdain, mockingly annoying them. Even when he has been forced into surrender, the worldly wise will not hide his superiority under a bushel; but even during His trial this Jesus had no thought for Himself. And we must remember that He acted as He did although His natural abilities might have brought Him honour, power, and repute (John vi. 15). How truly He could say, "I am meek and lowly in heart."

Jesus' humility is seen in its most radiant guise when it enters openly into the service of God. The German word for humility (*Demut*) means "sense of service," and the same word in Jesus' mother-tongue, in Latin and in Greek, means "lowly-mindedness." The mind condescends. Jesus' love was humble, that is, directed downwards, willing to abase itself and to serve (Mark x. 42 ff.). It is a mistake to think that in serving Jesus was merely helping. He compared Himself to a slave, and in doing so He wished to show us that His service was something lowly. Service is the opposite of ruling, it is help given in lowliness and weakness. Jesus' humility was the will to

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lowly service. It is true that it thus took on strength, for it is not mere endurance or quiet acceptance, but the humility of action, that actually does something. Often enough even in our own day self-interest, covetousness, and a commercial spirit have given members of Jesus' race a tenacity of purpose which has no tenderness or sensitiveness. With Jesus the service which stooped so humbly and which could never injure anyone flowed from love. His humility was a heroic sense and power; He willed to stoop, to use all His power in sacrifice and in lowly service.

It is true that this humility appears against a background of shining gold, thus becoming all the more glorious to our eyes. This Jesus did not think meanly of Himself, for He knew that He was the Master and Lord (John xiii. 13), the one green tree in the midst of all the dry wood, ripe for judgement (Luke xxiii. 31). With those He loved (Luke x. 42), and even with Pilate (John xviii. 37), He took up the central position, and His opinion of Himself would have been culpable in any other man (Matt. xii. 6; xxiii. 10). He saw no reason why He should bid those stand up who cast themselves at His feet (Luke vii. 38), and He had no sense of being a miserable sinner; while we can hardly speak of any humility shown by Him towards God. And yet this unique personality, reigning in solitary state high above mankind, stooped and still stoops to serve in lowliness, undisturbed and unwearying. If we wish to see the full glory of His humility we must keep in view who this really is that condescends so humbly (Luke xxii. 27; John xiii. 14).

We have seen then that the humility of Jesus was an effluence and an ally of His love. The same can be said of His patience. We do not refer here to His patience towards God, as this was dealt with in the chapter on His obedience. Here we mean to deal with His patience

towards men. It is in His limitless patience that Jesus' love for man is seen in all its magnitude.

As the Man of patience, Jesus knew nothing of coercing men by violent means. There were examples enough of this, even in sacred history, for the great prophets of His race might well have suggested to Him the use of coercion. The Old Testament tells of many miracles of punishment—and does so not without satisfaction. The apostles too, later on, took credit to themselves for such miracles (1 Cor. v. 5; 1 Tim. i. 20), and in the Acts of the Apostles these are conscientiously depicted as mighty deeds (v. 5, 9; xiii. 10 f.). The "Ape of Christianity" actually based his religion on violence, extolling patience as a lovely virtue only so long as he himself was too weak to do otherwise. We can always in fact think of reasons enough for recommending violence, or even coercion by means of miracles of punishment. In depriving Elymas of his sight Paul may have thought of the "blessing of blindness" which he himself had experienced (Acts ix. 9, 17 f.), and in delivering Alexander the coppersmith unto Satan may have consoled himself by thinking that the success of winning the man's soul in this way would outweigh all other considerations (1 Tim. i. 20; 11 Tim. iv. 14). What about Jesus? In such words as "How long shall I be with you?" (Matt. xvii. 17) we see clearly enough the trembling of His soul when He thought of God's work and longed for its progress to be more rapid. All the grief caused by the desertion of the people, all the fearfulness of tender love towards those whom He had chosen can be felt in the words, "Will ye also go away?" (John vi. 67). It must have occurred to His love that He might well make use of fear to coerce and constrain the people, to intimidate them a little for their own good; yet He withstood any temptation which had such an aim in view. His miracles were indeed like great bells calling men to Him, but not like the bell the poet speaks of, coercing the spirits of men by fear and dread. Jesus' method might be compared to that of conscience. He calls to men, "Think of your

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salvation, your obligations towards Me. The attitude you adopt towards Me may make you guilty of great sin or bring about your eternal disaster." But He says it only once and then leaves it, just as with the conscience there is no constraint employed. Though it grieved Him to do so, He let the rich young man go without attempting to detain Him (Mark x. 21 f.); nor did He press Himself upon the Galileans (Mark v. 17). He bore with the doubt of His own brethren (John vii. 5) without trying to remove it; though they must have been very near to believing in the Messiah, for after Easter we find them members of the Christian community (Acts i. 14). He did not forcibly remove the impure element from the company of the disciples (Matt. xiii. 30). We never hear of Him impatiently forcing Himself upon people; in small as in great matters He knew most wonderfully how to wait for developments (John xvi. 12). The right of the people to choose their own destiny is a phrase which has been flung forth into the world of to-day as though it were something completely new. The Nazarene knew long ago that even the individual has the right to choose; for He had the greatest respect for the liberty of men. That was why, after the resurrection, He showed Himself only to His disciples and not to the world, for He would not conquer the world by violence. We can say without hesitation that where coercion begins, the example of Jesus is not being followed.

Jesus laid all imaginable emphasis on the liberty of man. His patience is no small thing but has something of tenacity about it, even of aggressiveness, and in this aggression it is untiring. There is power in the words of the English writer, "Work and never despair," but it cannot be said that they fully render Jesus' axiom. No, that sounded a good deal more hopeful, joyous, and powerful—work and hope, work and conquer! And He worked with an unwearying patience.

Jesus never utterly gave up anyone. He made friends with publicans and sinners, with harlots and adulteresses.

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Did ever a man keep his patience so well with his opponents? How calmly He asked them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" and how kindly He proved to them their error (Matt. ix. 4, 6); or how mildly He showed them that He had power over sinners. "What man amongst you would do otherwise? (Luke xv. 4, 8). You act yourselves in the same way." Or think of His patience in instructing Simon the Pharisee (Luke vii. 40 ff.); or the beautiful gentleness with which He showed the Pharisees their own likeness in the elder brother—"Therefore came his father out and intreated him" (Luke xv. 28). From Elijah to the Baptist and Paul, all were zealots, but this Man was never provoked nor offended, His patience never grew weary.

"The man who has epileptic fits is not strong, even though it may take six men to hold him. The strong man is the one who can carry the heaviest load without staggering under it." This is the teaching of Carlyle. In Jesus we see this picture of a strong man not least in His attitude to His disciples. Again and again He was brought up short as though against a granite wall by their slowness of comprehension and their entanglement in unspiritually-minded hopes (Mark viii. 17, 21; ix. 19), and it caused Him many a sigh (Luke xxii. 38). To the very end the disposition of Peter (Luke xxii. 31-34, 61) or the almost audacious confidence of Thomas' disbelief provided Him with fresh problems (John xx. 25), but in His teaching of them He never for a moment lost patience.

In still another sense His patience was that of a strong man. "I will cleanse you that ye bring forth more fruit" (Luke xxii. 32). He was ready not only to wait, but to conquer in waiting.

There is no doubt that this patience of Jesus was put to the severest tests. I think, for instance, of the day when many turned back from Him (John vi. 66). How He might have despised men that day! That was how they showed their gratitude to God for offering them His

salvation! I think too of the great disappointment that Gethsemane brought Him at the end of the life lived with His disciples (Matt. xxvi. 40). He felt there was a great gulf between Him and these men. He had to suffer under so much pettiness, meanness, baseness, and selfishness even in the best of them; and He saw through it all as no other man could do. A similar experience led one of the great Hohenzollern rulers to say to Sulzer, "You do not know this reprobate race!" Yet the king, as a member of the same race, had reason enough to judge them more considerately. Till the end Jesus looked on mankind with the eyes of the Creator—"And behold it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). God created man after His own image and so all were precious, each of them more valuable than the whole world (Matt. xvi. 26). Jesus knew that, hidden deep beneath the dross of every day, there lies something in man which is destined for eternity. And with the patience of searching love He sought for this innermost core of the human heart. Loneliness, one of the curses of greatness, Jesus was not spared; but He never knew the second curse, a feeling of contempt. He never saw the sons of men wending their way far beneath His feet. He was saved from this by the ardent glow of His love and its inextinguishable patience.

It had other burdens and trials to bear besides those we have described. Jesus experienced treatment at the hands of men which might well have turned His patient love into bitter hatred. That He was accused of being mad and possessed (John vii. 20; x. 20) and that His life was constantly being threatened (Matt. xii. 14) were among the least of these. But that one whom He had trusted should betray Him with a kiss, that a servant should strike Him in the face, that the chief men among His people should give free course to their hatred in the lowest reviling, that He should become the mark for the ribald jests of a whole cohort of Roman soldiers, and that at the last He should hang on a tree of shame between two murderers—all these things might well have driven

Him from the hitherto unsubdued fortress of His patient love. But nothing was able to do this. Even when He spoke to Judas in the hour of decision there was no tone of sharpness or irritation in His voice. Those sitting with Him may have thought that Jesus was sending the disciple on some errand to do with the feast (John xiii. 28 f.). Afterwards He bore his kiss without shaking him off like a poisonous viper (Matt. xxvi. 49). In Gethsemane He told His pursuers calmly that He had been daily in the Temple with them (Matt. xxvi. 55). He sought to awaken with a question the conscience of the soldier who smote Him (John xviii. 23), and by His words to deepen the stirrings of Pilate's conscience (John xviii. 36; xix. 11). And when at last He had to realize that no further blessing could be brought about by His words, He held His peace (Matt. xxvii. 14; John xix. 9); and then, dying on the Cross, once more prayed aloud for His debtors, many of whom were standing mocking beneath Him (Luke xxiii. 34). In those hours He was the long-suffering Lamb of God of whom Isaiah had spoken (Isa. liii.).

There was no question of His being forced to go through all this. He could have asked the Father to send twelve legions of angels against His opponents (Matt. xxvi. 53). Still less was such an attitude a matter of inherent disposition. He felt it all keenly and poignantly enough (Luke vii. 44).¹ But from the beginning there was in His heart a wealth of love which resisted all such attacks. The best we can do is to *learn* patience in the course of our lives, but He possessed it from the beginning. The great thing about Him was that He preserved it under the heaviest assaults to which it was subjected.

All God's revelation is in the long run a revelation of His patience. In that too He remains far superior to us, as a mother is to her child or a teacher to his scholar. With His perfected sovereign love, which was dependent on no one and could never be brought to shame, Jesus placed Himself by the side of the amazing and incredible

¹ That the ordinary tokens of respect had not been offered Him.

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patience of God. What the world saw then was God's love made visible in the form of a Man.

Yet we dare not say that Jesus was altogether lenient. His anger flamed against stubbornness and falsehood.

CHAPTER III

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDREN, WOMEN, THE COMMON PEOPLE, AND THE RICH

"The Friend of Sinners."

MATTHEW XI. 19

IN following the traces of Jesus' love, let us now see how it reacted to particular classes and sections of mankind.

First of all, it condescended to children. What did a child signify to the world of those days? Nobody had time for children, they were left to grow up under the care and oversight of slaves. If they disturbed the grown-ups, then—a whip for the children! It would have been considered a waste of time to love them or pay them any attention. Jesus' disciples followed the way of the world when they turned them away (Mark x. 13).

In ancient times they had only a bad way of loving children, making a shameful use of young boys (1 Cor. vi. 9). Otherwise they might notice their drollness, nothing else was of interest. Away with them to the slaves! A little later more attention began to be paid to the child and its life. Statues of children became favourite subjects of art. And the reason? They were seen to be quaint, roguish, merry, perhaps, too, quarrelsome and thieving, but it was particularly their rude health and strength which made them attractive. Thus the eye rested with a certain complacent pleasure on the child, but there was nothing further. It was the old story over again, keep the children in the background.

And yet Jesus had come, and with Him an unheard-of new way of treating children. He saw how they were pushed into the background and at the same time He saw that the child's nature was in special need of love. His eye perceived so clearly how their littleness required help

(Mark ix. 37). Jesus made it a wonderful rule to turn with special consideration to the man whom the world treated badly. Of course children are a burden, but it was the fact that the world felt only the burden of them and treated them accordingly which spurred on Jesus' love to take pity on them. He was, we might say, the first to love children—not His own, but strange children. What love shone in His eyes as He watched them at play! (Matt. xi. 16). We are definitely told of two separate occasions when He kissed children whom He did not know in the least (Mark ix. 36; x. 16), and such tiny tots, too, that some of them were still in their mothers' arms. On the day when He rode like a king into Jerusalem amid the scornful laughter of His enemies He made no attempt to stop the children who accompanied Him from shouting again and again the word they had picked up, as children do (Matt. xxi. 15). For He never disdained the little ones, His love always stooped down to them, in all simplicity.

Instead of blinding a man, love makes the eyes keener when looking at the beloved. As Jesus was the first to look on children with love, so His keen eyes discovered new things about them. We may say that He discovered the soul of the child. He knew that these little ones can put us to shame (Matt. xviii. 3). Grown-up people are often like ground which is hard through constantly being trodden upon, but in children there is room for great and pure thoughts. Fritz Reuter learned from Jesus when he wrote, "Teaching children is a different matter from making sermons. Now and then old people may be helped by sermons . . . but a child's soul. . . . You don't need a club, but only a tulip-stalk, to beckon with."

Then there is the unpretentiousness of the child (Matt. xviii. 4). Children carry a treasure of love, peace, happiness—one might say poetry too—about with them in their hearts; but with childlike simplicity they are unaware of it. They feel only their weakness and their

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need of help, they never want to be or to signify anything. And then there is the glad potency of trust that laughs at us out of their beaming eyes. They are thirsty for love, but courageous in their thirst. It is not without reason that we speak about anyone being "as trustful as a child." A strong personal love may influence and uplift a child, raising it up out of its former environment. A child does not ponder or reflect, it does not see the difficulties ahead. There is an unhesitating directness and simplicity too in its attitude towards God. It has what God desires to see in men also, complete confidence. "Thou art God's little fool," says Luther of the child, "thou art neither fearful nor careful, thou art sure of thyself; thou workest in innocence." It was from the Nazarene the world learned that the child is something sacred and inviolable, protected by divine love, and very near to the divine nature (Matt. xviii. 10). We know now that there is a greatness in the child which older men may well envy (Matt. xviii. 3).

Jesus perceived so much in children that others do not see. There are so many naughty, temperamental, bad-tempered, wild children, and there is something of all these things in every child. The apostle Paul often noticed their immaturity and imperfection (1 Cor. iii. 1; xiii. 11), and he frequently entreated his hearers not to be as children (Eph. iv. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 20). The wealth of Jesus' love made Him see beyond their imperfections, and their helplessness made Him feel doubly responsible for these despised little ones.

His love was like water, seeking the low levels; and so, as it sought out the child, it sought out woman also. For in the ancient world a woman was of no account. Graeco-Roman worship knew of no common aim in life for men and women, and Christianity was for long looked down on as an inferior religion because of its attitude towards women. In Judaism they were not despised, but neither were they

considered equal with men. A woman was even forbidden to offer a sacrifice (to put her hand on the head of the sacrificial animal, etc., Lev. i. 4; iii. 2. Mishna Menachoth ix. 8). Her only importance was as housewife and mother. A rabbi would have thought it beneath his dignity to speak with a woman (John iv. 27). After a good deal of licentiousness Buddha turned from women in disgust, and in Buddhism they are considered a hindrance to the spiritual life. Mohammed was a sensualist, but he utterly despised women, and in Islam woman takes a very low place. Jesus never called a woman His own and yet He had a warm appreciation of women. He was the first in all the world to recognize her as a moral personality and He placed her on an equality with man before God. It was to a woman that He first openly admitted that He was the Messiah (John iv. 26), and it was to a woman too that He first revealed the aim of His life—to have worshippers who worshipped in spirit and in truth (John iv. 21, 23). In what close relationship He stood to Martha and Mary (Luke x. 38 ff.; John xi. 5; xii. 2 ff.), and to those other women who were allowed to serve Him! (Luke viii. 2 f.; xxiv. 10). Women were in the majority in the circle of disciples round the Cross (John xix. 25); and it was a woman who was the first witness of the resurrection (John xx. 14). According to both the Roman and the Jewish law of those days a woman was not able to be a witness. Even Paul passes her over among the witnesses of the resurrection because her testimony was without value (1 Cor. xv. 5 ff.). In the conversation of the disciples at Emmaus we see clearly enough that they did not care to believe in the testimony of the women (Luke xxiv. 11, 22). It was defying the world to permit a woman to be the first to see the Risen Lord. Thus it was Jesus who first brought woman to honour, and Frenssen is right when he says, "Women of all the world, be grateful to Him!"

But what made Him act in such a way? Surely, above all, it was for the reason we have already cited, His mercy

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flowed like a broad stream, seeking the low levels of life.

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If this was so, then from the early days His love was extended over another great and wide lowland among mankind—over the poor. And though not exactly poor in the modern sense of the word,¹ these people were the lowly ones, the lesser folk, the superfluous and unimportant part of the population, the “plebs” despised by men of rank and standing. The rich stream of His love burst with full force over this low-lying country.

It cannot be denied that there was at the same time another thing that drew Jesus so strongly towards these lowly people. We must not think that He found any particular aesthetic pleasure in His association with them, or that it might be said that He delighted in the child of nature. Hansjakob may be right when he says, “Every man is an original creation of God’s hand. The more he is civilized and refined the more the original likeness fades.” And we may agree with L. von Stolberg, who says, “We must look for man among the people; Diogenes might have dispensed with his lantern if he had sought elsewhere than in the streets of Athens.” Yet so much is certain, Jesus Himself did not for a moment turn to the lower classes because He found them more interesting than those of higher rank. What drew Him to them—apart from His love—was the fact that He found there the most receptive ground; and this for the most varied reasons.

Among this class of people, with their small, peculiar circle of thought, chronicles, and emotions, He met first of all with the frankness of simplicity. These people did

¹ Such poverty never appeared to Jesus as something requiring His aid. Illness and death were the things that seemed to Him to call for His help, and more than once He intervened with a miracle. But He never relieved poverty. In His eyes possessions were too dangerous to the soul for that.

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not think very profoundly, but they had the direct comprehension of children. They judged with the heart. If they found in Jesus what their heart required, what did they care if they could not put the truth thus discovered and experienced in exactly the right form? They led a life full of love and trust. And as the chief end of life is not really the ability to reason, but rather the recognition and acceptance of the Son, these people in their simplicity hit the mark more truly than the others. Jesus chose His witnesses quite deliberately from this circle; because such simple people, with their slow, unhurrying natures, are always faithful custodians and conservers even though they may never be mentally capable of developing what they hold.

Another advantage these lowly people possessed was their primitiveness. They had no preconceived ideas or preoccupations, and therefore their hearts were not armoured with falsehood. Think for instance of the man who was born blind. His natural sense of truth was exasperated into contradiction by the haughty dogmatism of the Pharisees (John ix. 24-33). And soon afterwards, how naturally the same man affirmed his willingness to believe (John ix. 36). These simple people have much in common with children, particularly their loyalty and their dislike of hypocrisy and cool calculation. Their emotions are childlike, primitive and undisguised.

But what probably weighed most with Jesus was the fact that these people were not only considered as sinners by the ecclesiastical piety of the time—people who knew not the law (John vii. 49)—but felt themselves to be such. In the religious language of the day the “poor” felt themselves to be captive, spiritually blind and bruised (Luke iv. 18). It is true that most of them were not blessed with this world’s goods; but the chief point was and is that they felt themselves to be poor before God (Matt. v. 3). It is a fact that moral and religious life can be most easily awakened when a man is not suffocated by external possessions and pleasures. Jesus did not think

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of the "poor" as being without piety. They were unimportant people who needed and sought for help; they did not trust their own judgement; they were "babes" (Matt. xi. 25) needing a guardian and eager to welcome the man who was prepared to help them. Who can wonder that Jesus chose them, with their willingness and receptivity? Day by day He found that their hearts were the soil in which His seed throve best. And besides, in the finished work of the Baptist there was ocular proof that the Kingdom of God would first find its way among the lowly folk, the people of little importance (Luke vii. 29 f.). Thus Jesus became in this respect also a copy of the Father: like God "who comforteth those that are cast down" (2 Cor. vii. 6).

We can see most clearly how Jesus was forced by developments to turn to these people when we look at His attitude towards the rich. Again and again in our own day men have tried to ascribe "proletarian" proclivities to Jesus, an actual aversion to the rich. People have tried to infer that a feeling of revenge against the rich glimmers in His pity for the poor, and that this was the reason He turned from them, though they had just as much right to His love. In contradiction to this suggestion it can be quite definitely proved that Jesus' love stood on such a height that rich and poor, cultivated and uncultivated, were merged into one, as hills and valleys are when seen from an airship.

Jesus never drew aside from the wealthy, from those rich either in possessions or in culture. When they invited Him to dine He went without hesitation (Luke vii. 36; xiv. 1). He took no less trouble in bringing Nicodemus to a knowledge of the truth (John iii.) than He did with the woman of Samaria (John iv.). He helped Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue (Mark v. 22), and the centurion (Matt. viii. 5), quite as willingly as the leper in his rags. He let the crowd go on without Him so that He might stop and dine with the wealthy Zacchæus (Luke xix. 2). There is not a trace of neglect or irritation towards those

of high rank. We are told of only one man outside the circle of the disciples whom Jesus loved—that is, He took particular pleasure in him—and this was a rich man (Mark x. 21). The home of the two sisters which He loved to visit was obviously a prosperous one. It is evident from the visits of consolation paid them that the family had connections with men of priestly rank (John xi. 19). The two men who made arrangements for His burial on the night of the crucifixion were rich friends (John xix. 38 f.). And in what close relationship He must have stood with one of them, who gave up his own new grave for this malefactor and crucified One (Matt. xxvii. 60). We can find no trace of irritation against people of property and culture; and later on His followers noted it with particular gladness when a wealthy man joined their company (Acts xvii. 34).

It is true, however, that the names of all these rich people are given—Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Zacchæus—and that shows us where the canker at the root is to be found. Names are only given when there are few to give (cf. also Acts xvii. 34). Jesus found the rich hard soil, in fact generally a soil which yielded nothing, and He only won individual rich people for Himself. There is a curse attendant on wealth, honour, high reputation, everything that brings celebrity in its train, even wisdom and learning. For such things make men satisfied, and they desire nothing more. It leads them too to believe that they are well-pleasing to God and man, and thus bars the way to a change of heart (Luke xvi. 15). How easy it must be for a man to be pleased with himself when he has risen in life by his own exertions, and how apt he is to believe that God shares his pleasure! The prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," disappears from his lips unawares (Luke xviii. 13).¹

Wealth, too, has this peculiarity, that it occupies a man's mind; and, at least when it becomes the master, it makes any division of service impossible, exactly as in the

¹ And instead there comes v. 11.

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old slave relationship (Luke xvi. 13). And so, among those highly esteemed by the world, Jesus met from the first with strong opposition; pride, contempt, self-seeking, and vanity barred His entrance. By leaving Caesarea Philippi on one side (Mark viii. 27) and never entering Tiberias, the capital of His own province, Jesus simply avoided such opposition. Even in those days the old Swabian folk-song held good, "Oben sind d'Leute so reich, d'Herzen sind gar net weich."¹ The rich man is always afraid that people have designs on his pocket. He is afraid too of his own heart, in case it should carry him away, and so he allows it no freedom. Truly the barriers such a man erects against God are terribly strong.

Of course Jesus did not give up the rich altogether, but He saw more clearly than anyone else the barriers they set up, and He attacked them with incredible severity. He did not preach against them so often or so extensively as the prophets did, but He was certainly more severe and trenchant in His condemnation. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God" (Matt. xix. 24). What could be more severe than that? But in the sharpness of the tone we should see only the anxiety of His love. Only a cry which would pierce to the marrow could avail against this tremendous danger, a danger which Jesus saw was evident among His own people—did not one of the Twelve come to grief over it? It was the fear in His love that extorted this cry from Him and which brought to His lips the parable of the unjust steward, with its admonition (Luke xvi. 9); and of the rich man and Lazarus, with its warning (Luke xvi. 29). Even the fact that He lived His own life in poverty—to the point of being without shelter—was perhaps nothing more than an act of love for those among His people who were servers of Mammon.

To sum up, Jesus did not give up the rich, but He found them hard, unresponsive ground. Those classes, on

¹ "The people of high rank are so rich, their hearts are not soft."

the contrary, which the world considered low were for Him more productive soil. Thus everything pointed to His turning to the people of no importance.

Yet it was not only this peculiar state of affairs that led Jesus, whether He would or not, to the lesser folk. We should not be understanding Him aright if we did not perceive how His heart was drawn to them. It was always characteristic of Him to bring comfort to those of small account.

And in that age the "little ones," as He so often called them in warm kindliness, were in fact of very small account. The Pharisees looked down scornfully on the "*profanum vulgus*," the "Amhaarez," the "people of the land." The common, uneducated man could not read or study and therefore could not take any serious interest in fulfilling the law. And in the circle of the Pharisees it was an axiom that "the people who knoweth not the law are cursed" (John vii. 49). Even the gentle Hillel says, "No Amhaarez is pious."¹ So they were poor—though the extent of their actual means did not make them so; the publicans who had become rich were among them—they were the plebeians, despised by the scribes and Pharisees, the bad company shunned by the strict observers of the law, the lower classes according to the law, the unclean according to ecclesiastical judgement. It was the spirit of paganism which thus pervaded Judaism. Among the pagans even a noble man like Epictetus says, "A philosopher who converses with an uneducated man is like a sober man speaking to one who is tipsy."

So much scorned and disdained, those little people in Israel were also oppressed and burdened. The precepts of the law were constantly being forced on their conscience—so many of them in fact that the average man did not even know them all. And thus the "little ones" became "weary and heavy laden" (Matt. xi. 28). Jesus saw them outcast, despised, oppressed, and at once His love flamed up. The prophets walked in the high places of the land;

¹ Sirach xxxviii. 25 ff. is very informative.

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in the great events of history they were advisers to the kings and stood far removed from the masses. Jesus stepped down among the simple folk. He did not seek contact with the "important people" of Goethe or the "high-born souls" of Paul Heyse, with noble men or "complicated" natures. He came first of all to those who were of no account, the humblest among men. Lift up your hearts ye that are lowly! He knew that very few flowers grow in the world for such people. His eyes saw so clearly that they were like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. ix. 36), or like a "bruised reed" or the "smoking flax" (Matt. xii. 20), and He felt like the mother who, in a sense, loves most dearly the delicate child which stands in greatest need of mother love. When He saw them He had compassion on them (Matt. ix. 36); He loved them just because they needed His love most.

It is the same here as with the children. His eye, sharpened by love, discovered in these "little ones," too, much that was worthy of love, perceiving that it was they who could bring incomparably great sacrifices, like the widow with her mite (Mark xii. 42). Above all, He discovered their childlike spirit, so natural, frank, honest, upright, and kindly.

Neither ancient nor modern paganism has any use for humble people. They are simply the "superfluous population." "Canst thou demean thyself so low that the poor do not offend thee?" asks a Roman writer. Buddha did not desire to attract everyone, but devoted himself to high-born men of leisure: "This teaching is for men of understanding, not for fools." He despised slaves and those of low estate. It is very true that those who wish to describe with warm-hearted kindness life among such humble folk—as Wilhelm Raabe has done in his *Chronik der Sperlingsgasse*, or Fritz Reuter in *Stromtid*—must first have sat at the feet of the Nazarene. Schönherr, in his *Glaube und Heimat*, first learned to see the peasant by this means. Yet after this has been learned, it is often wonderful to discover how "highly born" these people are, how

much delicacy, restraint, and culture of the heart they possess. Jesus was the first to discover this; and His ardent love to these humble folk made Him harsh against their oppressors as He stretched His hand protectingly over them.

On one occasion, when the success of His work among these lower classes became very evident, Jesus broke into overwhelming jubilation over this state of affairs (Luke x. 21). He could not regard it as a misfortune that the high-born and wise did not find their way to Him, but that those despised and oppressed "babes," who were the "many," were given to Him. On the contrary this experience brought the gratitude of satisfied love to His lips. Jesus saw how in this way *all* men would find Him in the end. No measure of human intuition or wisdom showed Him this. Judged by such standards a great section of mankind would always be shut out from salvation. But great spiritual good does not seek acceptance and recognition in the understanding but in the will. Then it can become common property, and the aristocracy of the mind is done away with for ever. The value of man no longer lies in his understanding but in the direction of his will. Life lays its seed in a depth of pure humanity where differences of rank, means, and culture cannot reach. And Jesus rejoiced that it had pleased God to build His Kingdom on this broad foundation of the will. The furtherance of knowledge, the enrichment of the intellect, the possession of intelligence were no longer what mattered, but rather the winning of the will to a new life, and that can be achieved by everyone.

From Plato to Nietzsche, all those wise in the wisdom of the world are aristocrats. Yet long ago Jesus rejoiced that God Himself had sounded the death-knell of the aristocracy of the spirit on the day when He revealed the Kingdom unto "babes." Where they can enter the great man can enter too; he need only humble himself (Matt. xviii. 3). In Jesus' prayer of gratitude the emphasis does not lie on the admittedly bitter tone of "hidden from

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the wise and prudent" but on the joyful cry of the revelation "unto babes." From that day onwards it was left to the will of the wise to add themselves to the number.

If to-day we have in our Greek New Testament the living language of the people and not the pure Attic Greek, it is an everlasting monument to the fundamental fact that Christianity found its first footing in the lower ranks of society. It was indeed no wonder that later, in an age when Christianity had become aristocratic, many were ashamed of the supposedly vulgar peculiarities of the popular language in which the New Testament was written. Yet any Christianity which remains true to its innermost nature will always accept the apostle's words as something to be taken for granted: "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate" (Rom. xii. 16).

Jesus Himself stands here too as the likeness of the High and Exalted One, who does not value men according to the extent of their understanding, but dwells with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit (Isa. lvii. 15). In both cases there is a condescending compassion and mercy—and it was no natural characteristic in Jesus.

* * * * *

Nor was it nature that made Him a friend of sinners. In fact no man was ever so far removed by nature from such people; yet in His compassion He came into the closest relationship even with them.

It was indeed a close relationship—one could not imagine any more close in those days. Jesus shared a couch with these people and ate out of the same dish; He kept company with them at table—in the opinion of the time the closest and most intimate kind of intercourse (Matt. ix. 10; Luke xv. 2; xix. 5, 7). And it was just this that raised such protest (Mark ii. 16). They could have understood if He had proclaimed God's mercy to these people, or said to them, "Your sin is great, but God will forgive and forget sins that are red like scarlet; you may approach Him humbly, though you may be counted as

doorkeepers in His house." But this superfluity of mercy! Jesus not only did not withdraw Himself from these people; no, He actually called them to Him, admitting them into His most intimate circle (Matt. ix. 9), and treating them as His equals.

And what sort of people were these? The Scriptures call them publicans and sinners (Luke xv. 1). Publicans, who were regarded as half heathen (Matt. v. 46f.; xviii. 17), and unhesitatingly classed with prostitutes (Matt. xxi. 32); publicans, who were legally incapable of bearing witness, and who were half shut out of theocratic society. Sinners, that is openly gross sinners who, in close intercourse with Gentiles, had become tarnished with Gentile forms of sin, and who were considered unclean by everyone, so that intercourse with them was contaminating. Adulteresses (John iv. 17 f.; viii. 3) and harlots too (Luke vii. 37). The whole population of the (Greek) Decapolis (ten towns) within the limits of which Jesus spent so much of His time (e.g. Mark iv. 35) was marked to a considerable extent by the presence of these backsliding people who were profoundly despised by all who observed the law. And Jesus kept the closest and most intimate company with them, by sharing their table. This kind of intercourse must have gravely defiled Him in the eyes of His contemporaries. On the day on which He went into the house of the chief of the publicans, He was doing a daring thing.

Need Jesus have gone so far? He Himself has let us know His reasons for doing so. They are really essentially two. First, He was overcome with pity for these people. He was like a doctor who finds no particular pleasure in the emaciated, coughing, miserable figures which crowd his consulting-room, but who knows that he is there to serve them. Jesus knew that He was sent to these people in need. He and they belonged together, for they were in necessity and He could help them. But still stronger than the feeling of pity in His heart was that of joy, so often as these people sought Him out. It is an everyday experience that we treasure most the thing we have lost

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and rejoice most when we find something that has been lost for a long time. By telling of just such an incident Jesus Himself tried to make clear to us the particular joy He and His Father experience over repentant sinners (Luke xv. 5 f., 9). It was always with a cry of pure gladness that His heart turned towards the publicans and sinners; at such a time one may mean more than ninety-and-nine (Luke xv. 7).

Jesus' surpassingly tender treatment of these people flowed from this great and warm-hearted joy over the lost and found. They were accustomed only to rebukes, exactions, and punishment; even the prophet of the Lord had rebuked them (Luke iii. 13), and the Pharisees did nothing else. How severe a punishment it was that even intercourse with them was considered defiling. Jesus never rebuked them—just as the father did not rebuke the prodigal son (Luke xv. 20)—though He did rebuke others (Matt. xxiii. 13 f.), yet He let them see how seriously He thought of their sins by telling them of the prodigal son. But He never dwelt on the particular sin of each man—"Cast it not up against them." As soon as they came to Him He helped these people to their feet—"God is waiting for you, you are of value to Him." Then He gave them courage, restoring their self-respect and rehabilitating them by receiving them into His company. To take one individual case, think of how He awakened the publican's hope by reminding him that he too was a son of Abraham (Luke xix. 9), and how generously He praised the woman in Simon's house (Luke vii. 44).

It is a common experience that those whose good fortune has preserved them from falling into serious sin are apt to be proud and arrogant about it, thanking God they are not as other men, and turning in horror from those who have fallen. As of old the rabbi, so to-day too people think they owe it to their honour not to defile themselves by mixing with disreputable people. It is also true that those who have known humanity—or rather who have known man through and through as Jesus did—

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become hard and severe in word and judgement. But Jesus' love was so profound that these lost ones never questioned it, though they felt the keenness of His glance and realized how utterly different He was from themselves.

And He could give Himself up to such people and yet never fear for His own purity.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARNESTNESS OF HIS LOVE: ITS DIVERSITY

THERE was nothing sentimental or effeminate about the nature of Jesus; He was rigorous, austere, and chaste—in His love as elsewhere. His severity was absolute and was never softened by His compassion (though it is true that His mercy was also absolute and never interfered with His severity). In His judgement even the lustful eye and the lascivious touch were counted as adultery (Matt. v. 28). He knew nothing of the “blessing of sin,” such an idea would have seemed to Him frivolous. The mildest thing He said in this connection was, “They know not what they do” (Luke xxiii. 34). No prophet or founder of religion ever had so fine and deep an understanding of sin as He. To all who approached Him he acted as a burnished mirror. Flattery is a word that cannot even be mentioned in connection with Him. In a wonderful way He could, like His Father, love mercy and compassion and at the same time righteousness and judgement. He never made light of sin. His radiant love was always seen against a dark background of entirely serious and conscious anger. He judged sinners with both mercy and judgement, for in mercy He condemned sin utterly.

We see the earnestness of His love in His miracles. He knew nothing of mass-healing or of outbreaks of religious emotion; He treated each case separately. For His ultimate concern was with the soul—so much so, that John calls all His miracles “signs” (John ii. 11; iv. 54; xx. 30), indications of how Jesus means to cure the soul. To Him the soul of mercy was really mercy with the soul. And so we generally find Him healing the body and at the same time blessing the

soul (John v. 14; ix. 35 f.), which alone is of eternal value.

The earnestness of His love is seen too in His parables. He knew that such stories were not enough to unlock a man's understanding; He desired only to awaken inquiry so that inquiring receptivity might open the understanding. This form of speech condemned those who were obstinately unreceptive, for they heard the parables with their ears but would not understand (Mark iv. 10).

He was not only full of love, He laid hold on those who sought Him out; this accounts for the almost curious harshness towards Nicodemus in His first answer (John iii. 3). His vehemence and intensity could even lead Him to wield a scourge. He did not believe that it was necessary to lay hold of a man delicately. When a gentle hint had no effect on the Samaritan woman (John iv. 16) His mercy made Him go ruthlessly to the point (iv. 18). When His love failed with those who were the heads among the people and, in the unregenerate hardness of their hearts they tried to have Him put out of the way, He unmercifully tore the mask from their hypocrisy with terrible words, so that He might save the people if possible from their machinations (Matt. xxiii. 3, 5, 13, 15, 24, 27 f.).

So earnest was His love that it made Him outspoken to all. Very near the end of His life He pointed out to the servant who struck Him the injustice of the blow (John xviii. 23), and to the traitor the shame of his kiss (Luke xxii. 48); and in spite of His pity, He never excused the sins of the lost, or kept silence about them (Matt. ix. 2; Luke vii. 47 f.; John viii. 11). When He heard of the shedding of the blood of the Galileans it was with formidable harshness that He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3). (Similar harsh words, Matt. xviii. 6.; xxvi. 24.) Jesus was a Man of gentle deeds but never of gentle words. It was love that made most of His words as sharp as edged steel and as harsh

as the sound of a war-trumpet (cf. also Matt. viii. 22; Luke xiv. 26; Mark x. 25). Many of His words were sharp as knives, but they were never uttered bitterly, for His mercy towards sinners was as great as His mercilessness towards sin.

Let us trace the earnestness of His love in His dealings with the disciples. He never slackly allowed them to go their own way; to preserve them from temptation He could often drive and vex them—for instance, on the evening of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark vi. 45). He would not allow them to rest on their lesser achievements, such as subjecting devils in His name (Luke x. 17), but directed their minds higher to see what was really great: "Rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (v. 20). When Martha was offering Him loving service, He did not refrain from pointing out to her that there was something still more needful (Luke x. 41), and He sharply put a stop to idle speculations as to whether few would be saved (Luke xiii. 23 f.). When He spoke to His disciples of His Second Coming, He did not paint the future in vague, charming colours, but spoke sternly and relentlessly of His judgement and the consequent necessity of their being prepared (Luke xxi. 24 ff.). To guard them from temptation He ruthlessly wakened them, though they were weary and exhausted by sorrow (Matt. xxvi. 40), and He rebuked the disciples at Emmaus for their lack of faith (Luke xxiv. 25), as well as Thomas, in spite of the latter's full confession (John xx. 29; cf. v. 28). There are hints given us too of how earnestly He looked at the disciples in moments such as these (Matt. xix. 26; Mark viii. 33). One of them was even moved to tears by His glance (Luke xxii. 61).

It was Peter too who, next to Judas, experienced most fully the seriousness of Jesus' love. Just because our Lord meant to make this disciple a leader He was most concerned about his soul, speaking to him harshly, clearly and frankly, when necessary, even using such a

phrase as "Get thee behind Me, Satan" (Mark viii 33); or on another occasion, "Thou hast no part with Me" (John xiii. 8). He made no present of His mercy to this disciple. Because he denied His Lord thrice, three times Jesus asked him, "Lovest thou Me?" even though the question grieved Peter (John xxi. 17); and his boasting assertion, "If all should forsake Thee, yet will not I," was held up against him in the question, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (v. 15). The shoulders of his soul had to be strengthened, "Thou shalt have more to bear than all the others; follow thou Me" (John xxi. 18). Peter was the only one among the disciples who knew with certainty that he was to suffer the martyr's death.

Shakespeare, the man with a great knowledge of the human heart, once said of the weaknesses and deficiencies in men, "Ne'er would the eye of a friend see such a thing." Well, the friendly eyes of Jesus saw faults. He never supported His disciple so that they remained static; rather His love was the foot-washing kind, that is, it corrected while it blessed those He loved.

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There is one more point we must touch upon before we leave this great subject of Jesus' love. We have already noted more than once that we cannot regard it as altogether a pattern for our own. It is our object now to go further into this matter.

We dare not love as Jesus did. First of all, our love may not be so unprejudiced and regardless of persons. We dare not step down as He did among the outcast without fear of being ourselves defiled and contaminated. There is a feeling of fear often experienced by converts that they may be drawn back into sin by wicked example, and this fear is justified. An impure atmosphere is always dangerous for us, and easily becomes harmful. In offering Himself to sinners Jesus was always so strong that He acted as a purge; He was never infected by men, but rather transformed them.

In another respect too we dare not love as this Jesus did. We dare not set up the barriers in our love which He set to His. There is a note of severity running through nearly all the stories of His intercourse with His mother. Even the twelve-year-old Child met the natural anxiety and suffering of a mother's heart by emphasizing the claims of His Father (Luke ii. 48 f.). At Cana He refused to let His mother meddle in His affairs (John ii. 4). At Capernaum, while she stood waiting at the door, He declared friendship with the children of God to be of more value than any blood-relationship (Mark iii. 33 f.); and when a woman praised His mother as blessed, He cut her short by pointing to the blessed hearers and keepers of the word of God (Luke xi. 27 f.). If we try to put the word "parents" into the second chapter of Luke, or the word "mother" into His mouth in John xix. 26, we shall soon see that it does not do, because in both passages the word "Father" comes soon afterwards, in a very different sense.

But it was not only His mother, with her sons and daughters, who was made to feel sensible of His reserve, all His disciples, even John, had the same experience. It cannot be said that He confided, as we put it, in any of them. To none did He completely open His heart. The words "No man knoweth the Son" were true. Goethe said on one occasion, "The man who cannot laugh at himself is not the best kind of man," but such self-mockery even among His most intimate circle is quite unthinkable in Jesus. On the contrary, His disciples never dared to take the slightest liberty with regard to His position as Lord. There was in fact a deep gulf fixed between Him and them. More than once we hear that they were afraid to question Him (Mark ix. 32; x. 32; John iv. 27, 33); and often, after long hesitation, only the most intimate disciples were sent to ask Him a question (Mark xiii. 3; cf. xiii. 1; John xiii. 23 f.). He called all His friends by their names, Simon Peter, Lazarus, the Magdalene, Martha, and Mary; the Mag-

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dalene indeed recognized Him by the way in which He spoke her name. But even the disciple who lay on His breast called Him Lord (John xiii. 25); and the only thing Jesus said about such a ceremonious form of address was, "Ye say well" (John xiii. 13). If we wish to know, however, whether this habit of calling Him Lord was really significant to Him, we need only think of His exposition of the Psalm in which David called the Messiah his Lord (Luke xx. 41 ff.; cf. also Matt. xxiii. 10).

It is curious, the nearer men stood to Him the less intimate was their behaviour towards Him. The woman of Canaan and the Samaritan woman were not lacking in familiarity and audacity (Matt. xv. 22 ff.; John iv. 7 ff.); but the women who were His followers fell at His feet (Matt. xxviii. 9). It is not because all through His life no one fully understood Him that we are conscious of a loneliness about Jesus which He did not seek to avoid: there is something more than that. This Man willed it to be so, because His heart, His love, His life belong to all; no individual child of man, be it friend, wife, or mother, should ever be able to boast that he completely possessed Him for himself alone. He belongs to humanity and therefore He gives Himself to no individual in any sense as an exclusive possession.

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In these two ways, then, we dare not love as Jesus did. There is still something more to add—we *cannot* love as He loved. And this "cannot" is true both of the reasons for our love and the extent of it.

What is the fundamental reason that leads us to humility and self-denial? Surely it is the consciousness that we ourselves would have been lost and condemned if mercy had not saved us. Now we feel as Luther did when he wrote, "My heart is too glad and too full for me to be at enmity with any man." We forgive because we have been forgiven, we judge not because we have received mercy in judgement, we are compassionate

because compassion has been bestowed on us. Even so it is not always easy for us to forget ourselves, and Jesus has thought it necessary to give us the parable of the unjust steward. But when we really practise self-denial it is because in grateful love we remember that we ourselves have been forgiven. It was far otherwise with Jesus. He did not patiently endure because others had had to endure so much from Him; He was not humble because He had any reason to think poorly of Himself. What drove Him was the will to serve. He had to love, just as the sun has to shine; He cannot do otherwise. In loving He is Himself; for, like His Father, He too is love. He never forced Himself to love, He took it for granted, it was natural to Him. The history of His Church is full of people from whose hearts love has flowed like a river. They have shown the world what Jesus can do, sacrificing the hearts which have been transformed by Him. He alone gave Himself as He was.

We cannot love as He did, and this is true too of the extent of our love. Jesus was purely love. In his *Heimgartners Tagebuch*, Rosegger wrote in his old age, "Let the man with an ego guard it. He may live for others now and then, but he should not allow others to live themselves into his life." It is true that Jesus did not allow others to live themselves into His life, but in spite of that He always lived for others. He was free of the "anguish" which Hebbel knew, of "having to love myself." In Him we meet with something quite new, which the world has never seen a second time—a Man without an ego. We are not like that, and never shall be, however much we strive. But gazing at this wonder, His disciples felt that here the love of God hath appeared unto us.

PART TWO

IN THE HOLY PLACE

THE RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PERSONALITY
OF JESUS

(C) JESUS AND THE WORLD

JESUS AND THE NATURAL WORLD

HERE we have indeed a wide field for our observation. The world around us is so vast, its phenomena so abundant. What attitude did Jesus adopt to it all? We mean to confine our attention here to two questions. If the world is a collection of good things, what use did Jesus make of it? And if, on the other hand, it appears to us as a mass of problems or of duties, how did He affect such a world?

The world has something to offer. It is not only full of colour and sound, but it has attractions for all our senses. It has so many benefits to distribute that it can delude our hearts into believing that it is in sum and substance everything that is good. How did Jesus make use of these benefits?

First of all, it can be said with certainty that He used them all quite naturally and freely. The coat for which the soldiers cast lots was in a certain sense an article of luxury (John xix. 23). And the salve which Jesus did not prevent Mary from using to anoint His feet six days before His death was certainly a luxury. Anxious minds, seeing such "waste," thought of the poor to whom the money might have been of more use (Matt. xxvi. 8). But these are not merely single instances. The same simplicity and absence of prejudice with regard to the pleasures offered by the world run like a scarlet thread through His whole life. He so often took part at feasts and banquets, and even at a wedding-party (Luke vii. 36 ff.; x. 38 ff.; xiv. 1; John xii. 2)—and how many delights such ceremonies offer, especially in the East!—that blasphemous lips could call Him a gluttonous man and a winebibber (Matt. xi. 19). After the calling of one of His disciples He suffered the occasion to be celebrated by a feast (Matt. ix. 10), and He attended a supper given him as a mark of gratitude (John xii. 2). It

was at a supper that He spent the last undisturbed hours with His disciples; and when on that occasion He spoke of taking up His life again, He used the symbol of drinking new wine in the Kingdom of God quite naturally (Matt. xxvi. 29). But He went further: for He unhesitatingly compared the joys of the present Kingdom (Matt. xxii. 2) and the splendours of the future Kingdom of God (Matt. xxv. 1) with the pleasure of feasting; and Himself to a bridegroom (Matt. ix. 15). His mother knew that she might confidently come to Him with the news that the wedding guests had no wine (John ii. 3): and He Himself said that old wine is better than new, and that once a man has tasted it he prefers it to all other kinds (Luke v. 39). When in His parables Jesus described a scene of rejoicing He spoke of the slaughtered calf, music, and dancing (Luke xv. 23, 25). He never regarded His body as a thing of no account, but took the good things of the world quite naturally. He admitted being both hungry and thirsty. In the meeting with the Samaritan woman, for instance, He might easily have waited for a short time till the disciples returned with a vessel for the water (John iv. 8). Even on the Cross He admitted His thirst, His last refreshment being a thin, sour wine, such as soldiers and labourers drank (John xix. 29).¹ He was not ashamed of being weary and used the cushion in the ship as His pillow as a matter of course (Mark iv. 38); and He did not oppose His disciples when they laid their clothes on the ass to make it more comfortable for Him (Matt. xxi. 7). He knew how pleasant it was to have His feet bathed—think how He Himself washed the disciples' feet (John xiii. 4 f.)—and twice He gladly accepted the unusual honour of having His own feet anointed (Luke vii. 38; John xii. 3); nor did He prevent Martha from expressing her love in all kinds of service (Luke x. 40).

¹ He only refused the drink when He tasted what had been added to it, either in kindly or unfriendly spirit (Matt. xxvii. 34; Mark xv. 23).

Mohammed thought it a virtue to despise and detest wine, but it was in the most natural way that Jesus linked even His memorial rite with the enjoyment of good wine (Mark xiv. 23); and He had no hesitation in giving about 500 litres of wine as a wedding present to the young couple at Cana (John ii. 6). So far removed from asceticism was He that He tried to save the people in the wilderness from hunger (Mark viii. 2 ff.); and He defended His disciples when they broke the law of the Sabbath because they were hungry (Matt. xii. 7). Fasting as a law or habit or as something inspired from without had no meaning for Him (Mark ii. 19). This is all the more significant because, in judging thus, Jesus opposed not only the custom of His predecessors, but the view held by the majority of the people (Mark ii. 18; Matt. xi. 19). How little Arno Holz understood His mentality when he dared to write:

Es ist die Welt mit ihren grünen Landen,
Ein braves Wohnhaus und kein Lazarett;
Und niemand hat sie ärger missverstanden
Als jener Zimmerssohn aus Nazareth.

The world around us offers so many pleasures and enjoyments and Jesus made free use of them. How His eye delighted in the beauties of nature! We can say without exaggeration that He lived in nature. The reports given us by modern travellers often tell of magnificent landscapes and the surprising beauty of the Holy Land. It is a fact that Jesus had more experience than most men of the beauties of lakes and mountains, and He saw it all in the most delightful way, while wandering on foot through the countryside, under the glow of an eastern sun. One who has visited Palestine writes, "The sun! A North-countryman simply does not know what sun is. When I think of the sun of the Orient, I am overcome with the most intense longing." And what kaleidoscopic pictures there were under this glorious sunshine! The Crusaders noted that on the road from

Jerusalem to Jericho a man could observe more varieties of climate and of country in a few hours than can be found elsewhere in a thousand miles. Or take the charming landscape of Caesarea Philippi—a veritable garden of God where water and trees are found in abundance, and Alpine streams and meadows where speedwell makes a blue-flowered carpet. Or strike down to the Lake of Tiberias from the eastern side. The road runs through high, lush grass, full of meadow flowers; here there are fiery red poppies and velvety-blue irises, anemones and bird's-eye, great burnet and wild carnations, tulips and veronica. And quite suddenly there comes the view of the glittering lake from the plateau, over 2,000 feet high. What colour and brilliance in the glow of the sun, while in the north, snow-capped Hermon stands like a silent sentinel.

What a gift of observation Jesus had! He could tell of lilies and sparrows, of mountains and hills, of briars and vines, of lightning, rain storms, and sunshine, of fruitful and barren trees, of sunrise and sunset. The man who reads his Bible is familiar with the thoughtful descriptions of nature in the Psalms, for instance. But it is significant of Jesus that He did not break out in admiration of the glory of the storm effects over sea or desert, in the mountains or the forests (Ps. xxix.); nor exclaim with Sirach as he gazed on sun, moon, storm, and thunderclouds, and the mighty sea, "Who shall be filled with beholding His glory?" (Ecclus. xlii. 25). Jesus kneeled beside the meadow flowers and saw in them, as He has taught us to see, a beauty before which Solomon in all His glory grows dim (Matt. vi. 29). The objects of His admiration were the little things, the birds, even the sparrows (vi. 26). How happily He looked at it all, and how His heart fed in green pastures the while! The ripening cornfields did not make Him think of the sickle, soon to seek its sacrifice there, but of the much more joyful fact that the earth and God's sun would ripen the seed the sower had entrusted to their

care, and bring it to golden corn (Mark iv. 26-29). The little sparrow falling dead from the roof did not tell Him that all things must die, but that the Father above cares even for the smallest (Matt. x. 29 ff.). When the ravens croaked in the wintertime, they did not speak to Him of hunger and want, but of the beneficent God who feeds even the ravens (Luke xii. 24). And thus Jesus' soul was refreshed by the lovely world under the Eastern sun, drinking in gladness and not sadness from all that His eyes saw.

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Yes, indeed, the world has something to offer, and Jesus enjoyed its benefits simply and naturally. What was the reason of this innocent enjoyment? He knew that the earth is the Lord's, witnessing to the fatherly goodness of God. For Him the day had already dawned of which Kepler once spoke with longing and which he thought he saw in spirit, "when men shall recognize God in nature as well as in the Scriptures, and rejoice in the twofold manifestation." All the benefits of the earth were to Him the gifts of God. He was sure that they were to be enjoyed and used in a childlike spirit, with eyes raised to the Father in gratitude and praise. A child is acting wrongly if it seeks to break loose from the enjoyment its senses bring it, and to liberate the God-like spirit from the less God-like world of the senses. For in so doing it forgets that our sensibilities and natural feelings have been given us by the Father; and it grieves Him when we regard them as something alien to Him. Jesus took a warm pleasure in this world, regarding it as God's garden, full of pure and precious benefits and delights which can be enjoyed freely and chastely by the pure in heart. He never felt the world to be "bad" in the sense of being "hard." What He grieved over was its "wickedness." That it was an "imperfect" world did not distress Him. In a certain sense He was always ready to speak of the "best" of all worlds; for it was altogether

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His Father's world and in His dealings with it He remained in intercourse with His God from whom it had its being. It was He who taught this to His apostle, for Paul, as a Jew, did not know—as indeed no pagan philosopher knew—that “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. iv. 4).

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There are other reflections we must add if we are to understand thoroughly the innocence with which Jesus made use of the world. Our own dealings with it are those of creatures whose wings have often been scorched in its flame. This is not the fault of the flame but of our flying into it. And so in the pious man a feeling of anxiety is created and remains as often as he comes into contact with the world—an anxiety justified by a thousand experiences. Jesus never had such experiences in His use of the world, He never had the feeling of being the world's debtor; and therefore His delight never dimmed for a moment. He looked the world in the face, and never had to sink His eyes in shame before it. How different from Buddha. Buddhism was born on the night when the prince's son faithlessly deserted his wife and child, turning away in disgust from the pleasures of existence and from existence itself. Who can wonder that all his life long his disposition was that of one who has been burned by fire? He had grown weary of the world. But Jesus never knew this feeling. He never spoke wearily of the suffering of the whole world, what He spoke of was the sin of the whole world.

In the more mature Jewish apocalyptic the culmination of the pious man is reached when, no longer in need of comfort, he can be grateful for suffering. “How precious is chastisement!” “Rejoice O ye righteous in your present sufferings!” (cf. Baruch). Men had grown afraid of prosperity. “Woe unto you sinners . . . when your friends shall say, They died in glory and no judgement was

passed upon them in their lifetime" (Enoch). The school of Ismael taught that "He who goeth for forty days without chastisement hath received his benefit; his reward is lost." The pious man was afraid of too much happiness. He hoped first by suffering to remove the mountain of his sin. Jesus did not have the anxious conscience of so many of the pious of His day, the feeling that previous sin had to be paid for, and that was why He made use of the world, His Father's work, so innocently and gladly.

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It is clear that Jesus would not have had this feeling of innocence if He had not been aware of His lordship over the world. The world served Him, He never served it. He could use its benefits without being injured by them. He looked out into the world frankly and openly, but its gifts were never a temptation to Him. He was so free from all self-seeking that He could quite naturally make use of things which it would defile even the best of men to use. The world had no power over Him either through fear or seduction. For Him there was no unbridgeable gulf between delight in the world and a life with God. To Him all was pure because He had an absolutely pure heart. He delighted in the world, but in comparison with His Father it counted as nothing to Him. This was the continual contradiction in His nature—He was closely bound to the world and yet enjoyed at the same time complete independence from it. Only one who was sure that He was its master could have acted in this way.

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He was just as sure that His disciples were not its masters. That was why He never desired to be wholly their example in this respect. We can never share His immunity, for we are bound by the common lot, the world with its benefits is always a danger to us. Because

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Jesus knew this, the teaching He gave to others on this subject was quite different from the attitude He adopted Himself. He often spoke harshly and vehemently of the possessions of this world, for He would rather His followers were to enter the Kingdom of God with only one arm or one eye (Matt. xviii. 8 f.) than remain outside altogether. And so He did in fact recommend to them this wise attitude of self-mutilation in their use of the world. For Himself such self-mutilation was not necessary, nor did He ever practise it.

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Or did He do so in one respect? Is it not true that He never called a woman His own? We cannot doubt for a moment that Jesus saw a great benefit in marriage. In some of His parables He depicted the joy of a wedding as the greatest there is, even comparing Himself to a bridegroom. He Himself took part in one wedding, and He took the keenest pleasure in the olive branches which are the result of such a union. Besides this, He invoked the law of creation (God made them male and female) against Moses, revealing its full inner meaning and seriousness (Matt. xix. 4 ff.). Those of us who know Him realize that Jesus never belonged to those who forbid the married state (1 Tim. iv. 3); nor can we even believe it possible that He would ever have given the advice offered by His apostle, that it is better not to marry (1 Cor. vii. 27, 38, 40). But all the more, the question forces itself upon our minds, why did Jesus not have a wife if He believed that there is no higher or better state than that of marriage? From very early days a satisfactory answer has been supposed to be found in His words about those "which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Matt. xix. 12). Both the Baptist and Paul remained single for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, renouncing their natural rights (1 Cor. ix. 5); and how much more suited this was to the Man who did not belong in any special sense

even to His mother, but to humanity. There are many to whom this is a satisfactory answer, but to me it seems that, though it may be correct, it does not give the complete answer. When Jesus came forth as the Messiah He was already much older than the Hebrew lad generally was when he married (at about eighteen); but He was already living according to the laws of the fulfilled Kingdom of God, when there shall be no marriage, neither giving in marriage (Matt. xxii. 30). He was already "the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13); therefore marriage was for Him in fact impossible. His uniqueness forbade it.

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But we have said enough about all this, and we still have to describe Jesus' attitude towards the world from another side. Not only does the world offer us its gifts and benefits, it also makes claims and demands upon us, insisting on some discharge of duties from our side. What attitude did Jesus adopt with regard to this?

It seems to me that it can best be described by the word "reserve."

It was not with contempt that He regarded the world with its regulations and duties. His disciples could presume on His interest in the Temple building with its mighty white marble pillars and the great terraces of its outer courts (Matt. xxiv. 1). He showed what He thought of it when He said that he who desires to build a tower considers first whether he can really afford it, since the expense of it is great (Luke xiv. 28). He noticed everything: the soft clothing in kings' houses (Matt. xi. 8), the image of Caesar on the money (Matt. xxii. 19), the princes' preparations for war (Luke xiv. 31). In His parables He regarded the world's culture with a friendly eye, the work of the sower and the misfortune which attended it, the labour in the harvest and the vineyard, valuing such work in the sphere of agriculture as a symbol of the Kingdom of God. All that would be taken for

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granted by one who, as a child, had read in His Bible how God commanded man to replenish the earth and subdue it (Gen. i. 28). A world cannot exist without work, and Jesus knew as well as His Father that we are in need of all these things. He never upheld poverty as an example to be followed. The five brothers were advised to listen to the prophets, not to cast away their wealth (Luke xvi. 29). It was only in unusual cases that Jesus called a man away from his ordinary occupation (Matt. ix. 9; Luke v. 10 f.). Indeed, with His law about love He gave men the greatest incentive to work; He knew that earthly possessions may be used to forward God's purpose (Luke xvi. 9 ff.). It did not seem to Him a bad thing to win the world, and there was in fact something attractive to Himself about the idea (Matt. iv. 8). He did not believe in being a man without a country, and never despised the forming of a state; He mourned and hoped for His own nation, consciously confining His work within its boundaries. He obediently submitted to the authorities (Matt. xvii. 24 f.; xxvi. 63 f.), never stirring up revolt even against the Romans (Matt. xxii. 21); and even when they proved hostile towards Him He still admitted that their power was given them from God (John xix. 11). Ed. von Hartmann is quite wrong in judging Him to be "a hasty fanatic and transcendent zealot who, in spite of His natural kindliness towards men, hates and despises the world and everything pertaining to it, regarding all interest taken in it as harmful to the one true interest." No, Jesus never hated the world with its regulations and duties, nor did He despise it for a moment.

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It cannot be denied, however, that there was a certain disregard in His attitude towards the duties and responsibilities of which we have been speaking, and this fact should not be lost sight of. But we do lose sight of it if we are content merely to say that He did not regard

such duties as His own. It is true that for Himself Jesus knew of only one duty towards the world, and that was a religious one. His purpose was a religious and moral renewal and inner rebirth of the world. He never worked for any external improvement, and it can be affirmed that this restraint on His part had a beneficial result not only on His evangel, but also on the world. If He had linked up His message with things as they were in the world of that time, it would have had little to say to us to-day, because conditions have changed since then. But it is a good thing for the world, too, that, with a firm, conscious, and religious bias, Jesus declined to interfere directly in disputed questions of government or political economy, and that for the same reason He failed to lay down precepts and opinions about natural philosophy, and to demand their acceptance. In the ancient world, as with non-Christian peoples to-day, natural philosophy was bound by religious opinion. He left mankind free to form their own governments as well as to probe for themselves the secrets of reality.

Yet the phrase "a wise restraint" does not altogether describe Jesus' attitude in this regard. He does in fact show a certain scorn of the duties demanded by the world. All such things were to Him matters of secondary importance.

What is the reason for this? First of all it was to Him an unalterable fact that a human soul is of more value than the whole world. If a man is not made for the Sabbath, still less is he made for culture. Rather are culture and civilization made for man and man is made for God. Culture as an end in itself—science, art, or any other of the world's work for its own sake—was to Jesus still more absurd than the Sabbath as an end in itself. All these things must serve humanity, providing mankind with divine gifts, otherwise they become idols. To Jesus it would have seemed nonsense to say that culture is the aim of man. Human personality is a much greater thing than the most brilliant civilization. The

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essential thing about any man is not to be found in his relationship to the world, his aim is communion with God. We are not to owe anything to the world—that is, we are to serve others in and through it. But the main point is not how we affect the world in so doing, but the reaction of our work on ourselves and others. All our labour is to serve to build up the sovereignty of God in ourselves and in others, a new order of things far beyond all civilization and culture, a kingdom of mercy and truth. With such a goal before us everything else must pale.

Jesus' disregard of work in the world's affairs did not, however, arise only out of the high value He set on the human soul and His duty towards it, but was caused by the fact that He saw what such efforts on the world's behalf had already actually accomplished. From the history of His own nation He had learned how quickly the man-made governments of the world collapse again. He knew of how little value a knowledge of reality is in comparison with the knowledge of the truth which is essential to the soul of man. And, above all, He knew of the Day of Jehovah when the glory of man and all his civilization shall be like smoke, and shall give way to something entirely new. That is the difference between the attitude of Jesus and our own—our understanding of life is altogether governed by this world even if we do not deny the existence of another. Our domain is the physical, the metaphysical "has no interest for us." Jesus' comprehension of life was altogether governed by the other world, even when He did not deny the claims of this one; there was in Him a union of the physical and the metaphysical, for the one stamped the other with the hallmark of eternity. Yes, that is the great difference between Jesus and ourselves, but that too is what constitutes His greatness. All His teaching is supernatural; all that His life represents bears the stamp of eternity, is irradiated by God. Jesus could only warn His followers not to allow their eyes to be led astray by the world. He had a fine perception of the fact that an

advanced state of civilization means an advanced state of slavery, because of the deception of wealth and the cares it brings in its train. And in the end, it is nothing but a firebrand.

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Was Jesus unjust towards the world? Or was He right in His estimation of the work done in it? Is this world really too small not only for Him but for His followers? What have the great states and governments—even the mightiest of them—accomplished up till now? The civilizations of the ancient East or of Central America, buried under the sand of centuries, testify clearly how little man-made civilizations count for in the great economy of creation. Has not civilization so far sucked dry, destroyed and cast aside every nation which has taken a place in history? And in the long run is it not an experience repeatedly, though slowly and painfully, made, that all culture, learning, and art cannot satisfy the deepest longing and need of mankind? It is therefore with no common wisdom that Jesus warns the soul to be only a grateful user of the world in all its forms, working for it only in so far as such work is duty. Bismarck echoes this teaching of His when he writes—I think to his wife—"In thirty years' time, or perhaps even sooner, it will matter little to us how things are going in Prussia and Austria, if only the mercy of God and the merit of Christ abide in our soul." And the philosopher Eucken is right when he says that Jesus by His labours and suffering has transformed "all my enjoyment of the pleasures of this world into folly, and all ease and comfort in this world, ennobled and enriched as it may be, into unendurable insipidity. He has depreciated the value of the world and all its possessions, forcing men to look beyond it and implanting in them an ineffaceable longing for a new world." Since the days of Jesus "true manhood" is to be found in living *in* the world, but inwardly *above* it, seeking with the soul the country which lies beyond.

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Christ" (Acts ix. 14, 21; xxii. 16; Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 2; Rev. v. 13;—Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. xii. 8; Rev. xxii. 17, 20).

Christianity has adhered to this view since then, and if it was once lost, reflection has recovered it again through the centuries.

We for our part mean now to advance still further in our consideration of Jesus, and to seek, in agreement with the Christianity of all ages, to recognize in Him the "Lord" to whom we can pray. In so doing we enter the Holy of Holies which has been in darkness since the beginning, and we are prepared to encounter problems which we cannot fully solve.

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WHY WE CANNOT LEAVE OUR CONSIDERATION
OF JESUS HERE

WHY WE CANNOT LEAVE OUR CONSIDERATION OF JESUS HERE

UP to this point we have been looking at something immensely great. We have seen a Man who is unique in the history of the world, a superman, the masterpiece in the long process of creation, the prototype of the most ideal humanity. There is in Him a majesty of moral culture beyond which the human spirit can never go (Goethe). It may be that we are already familiar, somewhere or somehow, with what we have seen in Jesus. Even among pagans we find some astonishingly fine words and sentiments. The Bataks of Sumatra, whose moral standing is extremely low, have, for instance, some very fine proverbs.¹ It is said that Lao-tze anticipates in his teaching the fundamental ethical ideas of Jesus. What an abundance of beautiful words and fine wisdom there is in the philosophy of Greece and Rome! And, finer than them all, there are the best parts of the Old Testament. But even such words can only be found singly among much that is only chaff—and how rare it is to find deeds corresponding to the words!² Uttering such sentiments in a general way and incorporating them in action, even if such incorporation is only accomplished in thought, are two very different things. Jesus gathered together these individual rays of knowledge which have appeared now and again as though in a lens, and then turned them into reality and acted upon them in a way which has never been done before or since. So He became

¹ The empty rice stalk stands erect, the full one bends low. Thou shalt not suffer for it if thou give to him that asketh. No man can remove the rising sun. If a man is lost there is a reason for it, if he sink there is a cause. Stolen goods disappear.

² Lao-tze honestly admits, everyone in the world knows that strength is overcome by weakness and harshness by tenderness. But so few succeed in acting up to their convictions.

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the light of the world and the sun of souls. The many-hued pebbles of mosaic were perhaps already in existence, but they were lost and scattered, and He made them into the picture which is new—absolutely new.

The personal life thus presented before our eyes is an actual wonder of history. The person of Jesus cannot be deduced from mankind, in bondage to the power of sin and the torment of a bad conscience. In Him we see a wonderful new creation—a unique creative act of God. We do not believe this, we *see* it. In Jesus, God's will is accomplished in mankind. It can indeed be said that "Jesus is the will of God as it appears disguised in a human life." No instruction avails in this matter, but only a life lived as an example.

Doubtless what we have said about the gift of God apparent in Jesus could be still further augmented, and rightly so. Jesus' whole nature may be comprehended as divine love. That being so, the semblance of God is found in Him. In Jesus there dawned on the sin-stricken world an entirely new, direct, supernatural revelation of God; he who sees Him sees the Father. God "mirrored" Himself in Jesus and is only "perceived" in Him. God acts as this Jesus acted. Let us go still further—here *is* God. Goethe once willingly admitted, "If I be asked whether it is in my nature to offer Him adoring reverence I would answer, it is indeed. I bow before Him as the divine revelation of the highest principle of morality." Christ is our example, and from the very beginning Christianity realized this. If the Christianity of our own day were to content itself with this gift of God, to which men can look up and upon which they may lean, much cause for dispute within its borders would be swept aside at a single blow.

And yet our consideration of Jesus may not stop short here. Why not? Because of ourselves, because of Jesus, because of history.

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FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In the confessions of the Japanese, Utschimura, *How I Became a Christian*, we find the sentence, "We have ethical teaching enough of our own, every doctor of philosophy can provide it if he is paid for it." We know very well that in the gift we call Jesus we have in any case an advantage over the Japanese. If Christianity were nothing more than moral philosophy it would still be a moral philosophy of the most impelling kind, lived for us by a lovable Man. But what the Japanese justly emphasizes is this: Christ as the ideal is not enough, does not appeal to us with the full power of persuasion, but is, in fact, of little avail. What we need is that He should say to us, I am the way to the ideal. It is an old saying that age needs comfort, youth needs ideals. But here age has in it the maturity of experience. It would be a sorry Christ who could only be made use of by those with the shell of immaturity still adhering to them. The man who regards this Jesus merely as an ideal will be either forced into an unjustifiable optimism, trusting too much to his own performance or relying too much on the mildness of the divine demands, or he will break down. For Jesus as an example and an ideal is far beyond human attainment. We have no desire to weaken the driving power which lies in His person; but truth demands this confession. If Jesus is only an example then He is there ultimately so that we may recognize our sin. But this is no "evangel." The question already put in Acts xv. 10 might well be suggested to those who advance such modern claims. God appeared once again as the God of Sinai: there ten commandments on tables of stone, here a law embodied in Jesus whose effect on us must be overwhelming, but in quite a different way from the old law, because it is so much more profound, strong, and perfect. *Exempla trahunt*—yes, indeed, but in this case the example acts as a judgement. It has become the fashion to "orientate" oneself by Jesus. The man who does this conscientiously will be abased to the dust and rendered miserable in so doing. His

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conscience will torment him more and more. No teacher of morals was ever so strict in his teaching as Jesus. But His demands may well lead poor flesh and blood to despair. We can understand the cry of Augustine, "Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt. So shalt thou not command in vain."

Another point: it is true that in this Man, filled with divine love, we see the holy God who is also love. But are we, separated from Him by sin, united to Him merely by this vision of Him? What about the burden of our past? From the beginning conscience has always had a presentiment of expiation being necessary. Does not Jesus provide this?

Something in human nature reaches out longingly towards another Christ. We seek a Man who does not only rouse us to troubled exertion, but who will bring us peace of soul. Rosegger once wrote, "With longing I seek for other stars, for a kingdom that is not of this world. For we soon have had enough of this world." Now, we fear that a Christ who as a Man reflected God's nature in a way hitherto unachieved is still too much of this world to still our longing. The world would soon have had enough of Him. We need comfort—for the past with its faults and for the future with its demands on us—and only God can comfort us in this way. It must be that God was in Christ. Not only that in Him He established a new law or manifested Himself in His perfection, but that in Him He became the "Deliverer" (Saviour). It is ultimately in this sense that we desire God's deeds for ourselves. We are no heroes—what has God done for us? Do not let us think that all He has done is to give us a human life as a pattern of Himself and His nature. We require more than that. We need that He should, by a human life, bring us deliverance from judgement and slavery. The divine God and the God who aids—both are deep-rooted in His nature. The man with a knowledge of himself will never wish to dispense with the second of these. What we long for and

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need is not to become men whose hearts Christ has won for God; but rather, as Bengel puts it, our aim and deepest requirement is to be Christians whose hearts God Himself has won, through Christ—that is, through the saving achievements of His love. A Christ who is nothing more than an embodied law—however lovely He may be—is a dead Christ. Then, if He had never lived and we had only this likeness of Him depicted in the Gospels, it would serve the purpose. But we need a Christ who is alive, so that He can still help us in our weakness; and so, because of the need of our soul, let us look at Jesus again, to see whether He is not something more than merely our heartening and yet at the same time disheartening example.

But Jesus Himself will not leave the thoughtful man content to look on Him only as an example. This likeness of Him evades our grasp so long as we regard it merely as such. As we have seen in the preceding chapters of this book, Jesus' attitude towards God and towards the Scriptures, His way of praying, His piety, yes, and His way of loving men, are not to be taken altogether as examples. This picture is too great to be fitted into the frame which is to be found everywhere and anywhere under the specification of "man." Here we have no level country of earth, but the massive peaks and heights of mountains whose summits reach the heavens. It is customary to-day to try and level out this personality. But we must be gravely distorting it and misjudging its reality if we will not see that there are heights in it which soar upwards, bearing heaven upon their apex. It follows that the man who sees so little is constantly being brought up short by this likeness of Jesus, and he cannot perceive its greatest wonder. The personality of Jesus mocks at every comparison, thus itself protesting against being forced into the too narrow scheme of an example. He cannot be measured by our common

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standards. I think it was Napoleon I, that man with a great knowledge of human nature, who said of Him, "I know men; and He was no man."

What we experience in Jesus' likeness—its incomparableness for us—is directly indicated by His own lips. He had no thought of ranking Himself with us. It is true that often enough He invited men to follow Him, and His disciples repeated the invitation; but almost always such solicitations were concerned with quite definite and particular aspects of following, and certainly Jesus never meant that His disciples were qualified to walk by the side of their Master. Such an intention must have been far from the mind of Him who could say, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above" (John viii. 23); and who constantly and in such various ways separated Himself so scrupulously from His followers.

It is quite clear that for Jesus the significance of His mission did not lie in its example. According to His own words, He desires to refresh us (Matt. xi. 28). He brings us an evangel—glad tidings: to prisoners the news that they are set free (Luke iv. 18). He knows that it is impossible for us to free ourselves; for in a similar case He said, "With men this is impossible" (Matt. xix. 26). He was no empty, fruitless preacher of moral sermons. His desire is that the fundamental experience a man should make with Him is not that he should receive or witness any revelation, teaching, or action which he must imitate, but that he should discover in Jesus the truth, that He will lead him to peace and the experience of God. Through Him—Jesus Himself says through His propitiatory death—he is received into the family of God, and is given the strength of God's children according to Jesus' own showing, by the bestowal of the Spirit. Thus religious benefit lies in Jesus' person, and He consciously takes His place by the side of God. He demands belief, and the doing of His will presupposes this peculiar relation to His person (Matt. vii. 21, not without vii. 23; John xiii. 35, not without xiii. 34; Matt. xvi. 24, not without x. 32-39).

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We cannot, however, believe that the Man who, as the divine standard, obviously far surpasses all other men in His inner life, should at the same time have erred so completely in His estimation of Himself and His judgement of His work as people to-day would have us believe.

He is far more than our example; and His Church has borne Him through history as something much greater. There is no sign that the first disciples were overcome by the "inner life of Jesus." For years they had indeed been under the influence of this life, but when it came to an end their belief collapsed. What does this prove? Surely that the glory of "Jesus' inner life" had not the power to uphold them. Their belief was first perfected by the assurance given them by the empty grave, and by the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Spirit. In other words, not by the influence of the personality of Jesus, wonderful as that is, but by His divine majesty. When they possessed Him once again—and now as "Master and Lord" in the full sense of the words—their faith was established. Thus, although He Himself had said to them, "I have given you an example" (John xiii. 15), the apostles never thought of carrying His example enthusiastically and inspiringly throughout the country. But when they possessed Him once again, they bore Himself—the wonder of His person along with the wonder attached to Him—out among the people. No difference should be made in this connection between Paul and the others. Each of the Gospels testifies to the Christ who died for us and rose again, seeking to carry forward the message of this His majesty. If it were otherwise, it would not be so difficult to extract the so-called historical Jesus out of the Gospels. But thus it becomes clear that even the Early Church knew nothing of a belief in Jesus which might be described as "following Jesus of Nazareth"; it knew only "a prayer-relationship with the exalted

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Christ" (Acts ix. 14, 21; xxii. 16; Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. i. 2; Rev. v. 13;—Acts vii. 59; 2 Cor. xii. 8; Rev. xxii. 17, 20).

Christianity has adhered to this view since then, and if it was once lost, reflection has recovered it again through the centuries.

We for our part mean now to advance still further in our consideration of Jesus, and to seek, in agreement with the Christianity of all ages, to recognize in Him the "Lord" to whom we can pray. In so doing we enter the Holy of Holies which has been in darkness since the beginning, and we are prepared to encounter problems which we cannot fully solve.

PART THREE

IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

THE MYSTERY OF JESUS' PERSONALITY. JESUS
OUR LORD

(A) JESUS IN HIS OWN JUDGEMENT

PREFACE

"Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ."

MATTHEW XXIII. 10

IN Thomas Carlyle's view, "Nature demands from no man that he shall proclaim his actions and deeds, indeed nature forbids him to do so. There is not a man in the world who does not feel or has not felt that he demeans himself when he speaks of his advantages and his superiority. His innermost heart says to him, 'Leave it to your enemies or your friends to speak!'" So far as Jesus is concerned, these words of the great English writer must be strongly contradicted. Nature commanded Him to speak of Himself. We have learned in our study of Him, by constantly "looking" at Him, that this Jesus is incomparable. But this means nothing less than that mankind as a whole, and if left to itself, lacks the key to an understanding of the nature of Jesus. Only if He should reveal Himself to us can we attain to such an understanding. He must remain a complete enigma to us so long and in so far as He does not disclose Himself to us.

Should He do so, however, our only task is to see and perceive. We can never set up the reality for ourselves, but can only make sure of its authenticity and then accept it without demur. We are doing violence to reality so long as we shrink from accepting what has no analogy and allow our little minds to take refuge in the realm of the commonplace. Our duty is to learn to bear reality. In our consideration of the person of Jesus, that means to see with open eyes and to accept without scruple the amazing wonder of His life (Chapter I).

Thereafter through the inner richness and glory of the position which Jesus' own judgement of Himself reveals to us, we may try to discover outward facts about this Man which agree with what we have learned from

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His self-judgement and in their turn confirm it. It is more than likely that such an unusual inner majesty will be reflected in the outer world. Should we meet with such facts, we must resolutely refrain from any attempt to set up the reality for ourselves, but rather to accept it, even if it be without parallel in our experience.¹ Here again our one task is to see rightly and completely. We should apply to ourselves the old verse of Djelal-eddin-Rumi (Sufismus) :

Was Sonne ist, kann nur die Sonne lehren.
Wer sie will fassen, muss zu ihr sich kehren.²

¹ "We may not limit the bounds of reality by the bounds of our comprehension."

² What the sun is, only the sun can teach us.
He who would learn must towards it turn.

CHAPTER I

THE SINLESS ONE

JESUS did not live and work in obscurity (John xviii. 20). On the contrary, His life was lived in the public eye and in the closest companionship with the Twelve. His relations with them were near and intimate as family life, for He knew that only thus could they receive the full impression of His perfection, and in His humility He allowed them to see into His darkest, profoundest hours (Matt. xxvi. 38). It is a universal saying that no man is a hero to his valet;¹ but those who were most intimate with Jesus were loudest in their praise of Him. When later on they set up the precept, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves" (1 John i. 8), they deliberately excluded their Master, although they knew Him so well. The New Testament testifies that it was only a few decades after His death that the sinless Christ was preached to the people, but that by that time His ministers took it for granted that the Christian community believed in the Sinless One (2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5).

The belief of the Early Christian Church agrees with the finding of the Gospels. Even the morally acute eye of our own day can discover no deficiency or weakness

¹ In his novel, *Pastor Ritzgerodts Reich*, Nathaniel Jünger makes the old pastor speak about a Hamburg senator as follows: "He spoke with the greatest respect and gratitude of his senior . . . and confessed that he went to hear him preach as often as he could. To my question whether he had any intercourse with him, he answered with a decisive No, and gave his reason. 'You see, as a preacher, the man is one of my ideals and I cannot see the slightest weakness in him. . . . I want to preserve my ideal. If I were to get to know him personally, sooner or later I should almost certainly discover some failing in him, and then his reputation as a preacher would suffer for me accordingly. I want to ensure myself against that.'" No one ever needed such an assurance with regard to Jesus.

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in the Jesus of the Gospels, and it is not even possible to make the suggestion sound probable that in Jesus' earlier life there was any trace of this; for where are the marks and scars which would surely remain? Where can we find a single sign of a grievous memory or any revealing lack of assurance and gladness? It is truly a fact of no small importance that in spite of our very exact knowledge of His life it is impossible for us to find any trace of sin. It is easy enough to show the dark side of Mohammed's life, even if we had not his own touching confession of sin when he was near to death: "Fearful, beseeching, seeking for shelter, weak and in need of mercy, I confess my sin before Thee, presenting my supplication as the poor supplicate the rich." He was false, licentious, cruel, and tyrannical. We know the blots on Buddha's life, too.¹ Though we know comparatively little of the lives of the disciples, we are aware of failings enough among them.²

The life of Jesus, on the contrary, becomes more splendid the more closely we investigate it, and we can understand the instinct which made the man possessed of devils—that grievous servant of sin—cry out, "I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Luke iv. 34). What an atmosphere He must have created about Him!

In the face of this, writers of our own day have been unsuccessful in their attempts to depict Him as driven by inward tempests. "Again and again He tamed the potent forces which strove in His heart and turned them

¹ A missionary told me of quite a number of Confucius' confessions about his own shortcomings, which must be painful enough to the Chinese. Here are two of them. "Then said the master, 'That I have not been able to practice virtue aright, that I have not been able to utter or to pursue aright what I have learned, that I have been unable to change that which is wrong—these are my sorrows.' Then said the master, 'In knowledge I am perhaps equal to other men, but I have not been able to transform the essence of what is noble into deeds'" (Gespräche vii. 3 and 32).

² In Peter, Acts v. 9; Gal. ii. 11 f., not to mention his earlier life. In Paul, Acts xiii. 11; xv. 36 ff.; xxiii. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 14.

to good account." "He strove bitterly against sin, a troubled, striving, seeking Man." "His nature was not altogether free from evil." They speak of storms in the soul of Jesus and of scars on His face, but even though they add, as if in apology, "they disfigure but they do not mar Him," that does not help us over the fact that we cannot see such scars.

Or do we? Is His a "nature not altogether free from evil"? Moral suffering, they say, and uncertainty of Himself can be heard in the "Satan" which He flung at Peter (Matt. xvi. 23). But what if this were only indignation? In the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46), people think they trace the visible collapse of His life-work. But what if His trust in God quite openly celebrated its greatest triumph in that hour? "It is finished! Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." It is suggested that His anger was sinful, but was it not the strongest token of His ardent love, both when it was concerned with His Father's business (John ii. 17), and when He turned in wrath against the hardness of men's hearts (Matt. xxiii).

But did not He Himself distinctly refuse the epithet "good"? (Mark x. 18). Is that not enough? Surely it is time to stop dragging this word into the field against the sinlessness of Jesus! It is a solitary phrase among an abundance of incontrovertible facts, and it can be interpreted in many ways. Perhaps He declined the epithet because His moral growth was not completed and He was still learning obedience. He is not "good" like God, who cannot be tempted (James i. 13). His goodness was "attacked" every day. Or perhaps He only wanted to stop the youth from prating about "goodness" and lightly using this word (*taba*) which was only applied to God, just as "your majesty" is only used of the sovereign. This word was not to be uttered except in prayer, and the young man received at the same time a lesson as to the whole nature of vain titles, so common in his particular circle (Matt. xxiii. 7 ff.). But in this case Jesus' words

had nothing whatever to do with His moral consciousness of Himself.

Yet there is one passage which does in fact call into question the sinlessness of Jesus much more seriously. He Himself speaks of temptations in which His disciples had stood by Him (Luke xxii. 28). This sentence must not be deprived of its real seriousness. The fact that He endured temptations shows that the question of sin must indeed be taken into consideration. As Luther says, "Jesus had to fight to keep Satan at bay." But if He really had anything at all to do with temptation does He not thus incur at least a minimum of sinfulness? Can there be temptation without at least a sinning of the mind? No decision of moral value to follow the will of God is ever made without a clear consciousness of the lure of the alternative ways which might be taken. But does not the very contemplation of such God-opposed ways and the recognition of their attraction constitute a tarnishing of the mind? Surely not, if the sight of these paths with their enticements arouses no hesitation or longing in the soul, no pleasant trifling with the thought of surrender. By immediately cutting short the train of thought our Lord preserved the purity of His soul. The tempting thought never became His own.

"Tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). The second phrase would not be possible if there were not certain reservations to be made with regard to the preceding one. One thing is certain, a man is tempted when he is allured and enticed by his own lust (James i. 14). But in the Gospels we see a Jesus who was never tempted by His own mind.

Only from without did temptation attack Him. There were His own people, a nation which, by their increasing hardness of heart, might well have driven Him to bitterness, impatience, depression, and despair. There were, too, His disciples (Matt. xvi. 8), His brethren (John vii. 3 ff.; Mark iii. 21), and His mother (John ii. 3), whose lack of understanding and whose pettiness might

have turned Him in disgust and scorn from His own people. Again, might not the conditions in which He found Himself have awakened the desire to make more use of His power in leading the business of the Kingdom of God to complete and striking victory? (Luke xii. 49; cf. Matt. iv. 5, 8; and the temptations in other passages). Temptation must have come even from His Father, who bade Him tread in such humble and at the last such painful ways. These were all cases in which Jesus had to learn obedience (Heb. v. 8); that is, to preserve His obedience. But no tempting thoughts ever rose in His own heart; and because He repulsed these alien thoughts from without with the speed of lightning—think of the harsh words spoken on two occasions, “Get thee hence, Satan” (Matt. iv. 10; xvi. 23)—they were never able to tarnish His heart; they were like a breath on a mirror, which vanishes immediately.

Thus even Jesus’ temptations are a proof of the uniquely high plane on which He lived. They are on quite a different level from our own. His heart was pure, and therefore could not be assailed by temptation to impurity. Nor was He tempted to seek His own advantage, for it was His nature to love. But one thing He had to resist, that those whom He loved should not fall so low in His esteem that He could no longer love them. And He had to guard Himself against using force as a weapon, even though it seemed that such an expedient would be full of blessing.

The report we have taken from the Gospels is a radiant one, and yet it is not sufficient to establish the sinlessness of Jesus. All that we have observed falls more or less under the judgement of the words, “Man looketh on the outward appearance” (1 Sam. xvi. 7). So far we have done little more than establish the external faultlessness of Jesus’ life. But there is a deep gulf between such external faultlessness and sinlessness, and it was of

the latter that the Early Church was convinced. What were its reasons?

The reason lies in Jesus' own consciousness of Himself and the words about Himself which resulted from this. Jesus knew that He was free from sin. That we may fully appreciate this—for which we hope to bring still further proofs—and all it involves, let us consider two other facts.

Jesus had the most tender conscience. One of the ways in which He profoundly affected all history was that He established it as a fact that it is the intention lying behind any action which makes it sinful. To His keen eye the world of men seemed lost in sin (Luke xix. 10), lying under its ban (Matt. vii. 11; xii. 34; Luke xiii. 2 f.; John viii. 7)—yes, even in the death throes (Luke ix. 60). Man must start a new life by being born again (John iii. 3); only through complete rejuvenation is it possible for him to become a child of God (Matt. iv. 17). Nothing is more needful than a daily petition for forgiveness (Matt. vi. 11 f.); for in the eyes of the Judge above, who is greatly to be feared (Matt. x. 28; xii. 36), man is immeasurably guilty (Matt. xviii. 24), and adds daily to his guilt.

Jesus knew that all those around Him were sinners. But the second fact we wish to bring out is that in His eyes the worst fault of all was to conceal or to deny sin. The only thing that can restore man to God's favour is the penitent prayer with its frank confession, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13). One of the chief characteristics of Jesus' mind was His detestation of hypocrisy, self-satisfaction, and self-adulation.¹ This is what occasioned His continual anger against the Pharisees.

Yet this Man, who saw the world sunk in sin, and to whom the crown of sin was its denial, appears Himself before God and says, exactly like the Pharisee He had condemned (Luke xviii. 14, 11), "I thank Thee, Lord, that I am not as other men." He believed that He was free from sin.

¹ Cf. especially Matt. xxiii, also Luke xvi. 15: the man is an abomination before God who, by displaying his righteousness, is esteemed by men.

This consciousness is apparent from the beginning. The twelve-year-old Child knew that He had never forfeited His Father's love. Jesus was openly revealed to John, to the latter's surprise and embarrassment, as one who knew no sin. And when the Baptist thereupon tried to withhold the baptism intended for sinners, as from one for whom it was not fitting and who should rather Himself dispense baptism, Jesus acknowledged that John's impulse was right (Matt. iii. 14 f.). He was entirely without repentance and we never hear any confession of His own sin from His lips. He never had the feeling of being unfitted for His task (Exod. iii. 11; Jer. i. 6), or that the slow advance of God's Kingdom was due to Him. He knew nothing of a need for God's forgiveness. All the world was to live by mercy, but He did not require it. He never praised God for the compassion bestowed on Him (like Paul, for instance). Before beginning His work in the world He had already invaded the kingdom of Satan and subdued him (Matt. xii. 29; Matt. iv. 1 ff.). But it is not only comparatively that He sets Himself above us; no, the rest of mankind stands in sharpest contrast to Him; and when at last He was delivered into their hands it was for Him a painful thing that such an experience should mean falling "into the hands of sinners." For He, the pure one, never belonged in such hands. Was He not the green wood, in contrast to all the dry? (Luke xxiii. 31).

But this consciousness of Himself goes further, culminating in two great utterances. Jesus stands over against the world as Redeemer and as Judge. How could He have presented Himself as such to us if there were the slightest burden on His conscience? Only because He knew that He Himself was in no need of a redeemer could He know that He was the Deliverer, come to seek the lost world of men (Matt. xi. 28 ff.). And as such He saw Himself to be so immune from contamination that in a wonderful way He did not fear even the most degenerate, and admitted a publican to His most intimate circle. No one

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could change anything in Him, but He was confident that He could transform all men. "Who is so sure, that nothing can entice him?" asks one of Shakespeare's heroes, and expects a decided No one as answer. Well, Jesus was always conscious of His security, and thus He dared to set Himself up as the Judge of all mankind (Matt. xiii. 41; xxv; Luke xxi. 36). While earnestly warning His disciples against judging in case their judgement should return on their own heads (Matt. vii. 1 f.), He practised it Himself without hesitation whenever occasion called for it.

At the end, this consciousness of self endured without faltering the fiery trial of destitution and death. When the shadow of the Cross fell on Him and He gave account of His life, His conscience did not reproach Him, and from His lips there came the words, "I have finished the work." Then He prayed for others, but there was no prayer for His own salvation (John xvii. 4, 9, 11 f.). In Israel a man hanged on a tree was from time immemorial cursed of God (Deut. xxi. 23). Must not such a curse have given Jesus much cause for self-examination? But He not only died in the assurance that He would be that day in Paradise (Luke xxiii. 43), and that He was going to the Father (John xvii. 11), but in the hours when conscience made her reckoning He could put forward His own purity as the power which should redeem sinners from their most secret need (Matt. xxvi. 28). In such hours others have not even the ransom for their own soul. His soul required it so little, was so free from all guilt that He could offer it as a ransom for others (Matt. xx. 28).

It is true that it is only in John's Gospel that Jesus speaks directly of His sinlessness. But we do not miss this in the synoptic Gospels, for they give us sayings enough which undoubtedly presuppose this self-consciousness of Jesus.

* * * * *

In our observation of Jesus we are faced by a fact of His inner life which is unique in history: His conscience never separated Him from the divine God. There are many people who are not aware of sin in themselves, but the reason for this phenomenon is well known to us, the sense of perception in question being very easily dulled. On the other hand, history tells us of many people who have a particularly tender conscience. But in such cases they have cried with Luther, "My guilt, my very great guilt!" They feel the burden on their conscience ten times over. What we see in Jesus has only been seen once in the world, a great riddle—a Man who was the first to teach others what sin really means, a Man with a peculiarly tender conscience and with a detestation of all self-righteousness, and yet free from any sense of guilt. Who can explain it? We must leave it without criticism, marvelling at it as a miracle of God.

We have set out to see the glory of Jesus, and here we have one of its greatest manifestations. Lichtenberg says, "When the thunder and lightning roll around me, thoughts arise in my breast." As our thoughts rise within us imagination continually weaves its multi-coloured web; and it is this activity of our imagination which shows us how far removed we are from the purity of God. Jesus had a strong power of imagination; He knew what it was to meditate profoundly, for He spent whole nights in contemplation. But even when His thoughts arose within Him and imagination was at work, He never felt removed from God. "Children see and hear so much, and imitate so many bad things. I do not know why it is, but no child imitates what is good. This is an extraordinary fact, but so it is." There is one fact more extraordinary still, Jesus acted otherwise. We are endowed with a proclivity to sin, but He was not. We make the force of circumstances our excuse. In the midst of sinners, His development was steadfastly accomplished. Does that not point to a different origin from

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our own?¹ Does it not point to His being begotten of God? It is the difference between the pure snowflake falling from the sky and the slush through which we have to wade in the street.

Sin was not inherent in Him, yet perfection was not laid as a gift in His cradle. There is a moral progress which does not proceed from bad to good, but which rises from perfection to perfection. It is no less difficult than the other, but it is more glorious, and it is what God originally intended.

Another thing we should notice about Jesus is that He never worked for the good of His own soul. We never find Him like the ascetics engaged merely in self-improvement without benefiting others. He was no hero giving to the world the edifying spectacle of a man overcoming himself. All the time He remained a simple servant of God and of mankind, who were thus benefited by His fulfilling the will of God.

He never spoke of His conscience. That can have various causes; but one reason certainly was that He never felt the prick of conscience which becomes acute in the face of opposition.

Someone has said that Jesus must have thanked God for His ethical as well as for His natural aptitudes. But He never did that. Even in the high priestly prayer there is no thanks to God for guarding and preserving His soul from temptation. Who was this Man, able to dispense with such gratitude; who could simply take such things for granted, who could say, like the God of Horeb, "I AM THAT I AM"? (Exod. iii. 14).

We must listen to what He Himself has to tell us about it, for no one else can say it.

¹ Job knew of it when he said, "Who can bring a clean thing out of unclean? Not one" (xiv. 4).

CHAPTER II

THE SON

"THE Son of God" was one of the titles of honour given by Jesus' contemporaries to the Messiah (Matt. xxvi. 63). At first Israel as a nation had been designated God's son (Exod. iv. 22); and later the epithet had been given to the king of David's race as the representative of the people before God (2 Sam. vii. 14; Ps. lxxxix. 27 f.). It was natural that the Messiah, as the ideal of an Israelitish king, should also bear the title of "the Son of God" (Ps. ii. 7, 12).

In the synoptic Gospels Jesus never so designates Himself. It is comprehensible that He would shrink from using this title, meant for a political messiah. If men were to take Him for that, they would not comprehend Him at all. It was something immeasurably greater that He wished to reveal to the world when He called Himself "the Son."

Proud and daring, and full of confidence, He says, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son." Father and Son are both alike a mystery. No man can see into this inner unity and communion unless it be revealed to him (Matt. xi. 27). To God, Jesus is simply "Son," and to Him God is simply "Father." That is to say, only Jesus and God stand in this relationship. Both differ in their being from all mankind. But in their similarity of being there is ample reason for their mutual understanding. They are no mystery to each other; rather they know each other fully. Here we have a supernatural, divine consciousness, and only if that is present is Jesus a mysterious being who can be known only by God. This is a clear claim on the part of Jesus to divinity.

Can the well-known passage out of *Lun-Yu* be put on

the same level as these great words? "Then said the master [Confucius], 'Alas, there is no one that knoweth me!' Then said Tze-Kung, 'What does that mean, no one knoweth the master?' Then answered the master, 'I murmur not against heaven nor complain against man. I search and inquire here below, and I strive towards heaven. Only heaven knoweth me.'" There is only an apparent similarity here. Confucius feels that it is in his searching and inquiring that no one understands him—but no one comprehended Jesus in the mystery of His being.

The Pharisees' conception was just when they said of Him, "Thou bearest record of Thyself" (John viii. 13). Such a habit is always looked on with suspicion (John v. 31), and in a court of law such a testimony is not considered of much importance. But Jesus was forced thus to testify because in the whole world no one but Himself had any comprehension of the origin or the goal of His advent (John viii. 14).

The self-testimony of which we have spoken does not stand alone in solitary grandeur. When Jesus compares speaking against Himself with speaking against the Holy Ghost (Matt. xii. 32), this again puts Him on a level with divinity. And when in the passage about no one knowing the hour when the world shall be judged, He builds up a sort of pyramid, no man—not the angels—nor the Son—but the Father (Matt. xxiv. 36), He again places Himself very near to God. He links Himself with God in the intimate "we"—both of us, the Father and I (John xiv. 23). He never calls God His Lord, as He never calls Himself a prophet. He stands as near to God as the prince related by blood stands to the ruler on the throne (Matt. xvii. 25). It was only for the sake of those who did not recognize Him for what He was that He acted as though He were still a subject. He to whom it was given to be His forerunner was for that reason alone the greatest in the old covenant of all that are born of women (Matt. xi. 11). He did not refuse as unfitting

the title of "my Lord and my God" with which Thomas addressed Him, only rebuking the disciple that he had not recognized the truth earlier (John xx. 28). And when He says that the Father is greater than He (John xiv. 28), the fact that He should consider it necessary to say such a thing betrays a tremendous consciousness of Himself. It is true that it is only in John's Gospel that the word "begotten" is used (John iii. 16; cf. Mark xii. 6), but no one can deny that in the synoptic Gospels Jesus has this consciousness. "My Father" was on the lips of the twelve-year-old Child, but as this relationship to God was supposed to justify the apparent denial of the relationship to the earthly parents (Luke ii. 48), it must have been something quite peculiar; for the consciousness of belonging to the chosen sons of Jehovah could never have suggested such an antithesis to the Jew.

It was this unique relationship to God, rooted in the profoundest depths of Jesus' nature, that gave rise to the full and potent consciousness of being the Son which He describes in the parable of the prodigal son and in the high priestly prayer. "Father, all that is Mine is Thine, and what is Thine is Mine" (Luke xv. 31; John xvii. 10). Here all division of possession comes to an end. That is why Jesus takes the prophecy in which God says, "I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare My way before Me" (Mal. iii. 1), and uses it as though the words came from His own lips (Matt. xi. 10). In the same way He calls Himself, in the place of Jehovah (Is. xl. 11; Ps. xxiii. 1), the Shepherd (John x. 2), and the Bridegroom (Mark ii. 19; Hos. ii. 19)—not even the friend of the bridegroom—and He calls the congregation of Jehovah (Deut. xxiii. 2, 3, 4; Num. xvi. 3) simply His congregation (Matt. xvi. 18), though in the whole of the Old Testament it was never called Moses' congregation.¹ He even makes use of the same colours to depict the day of His Second Coming as are used to paint the Day of Jehovah (Mark xiii). He declines

¹ Or the Kingdom of God His Kingdom (Matt. xiii. 31; Luke xxii. 30).

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to show the Father, for He Himself is the representation—that is, the manifestation of the Father (John xiv. 9). Thus His honour is God's honour (John xi. 4), both mentioned in a single breath, just as His dishonour at once signifies that the Father, too, is dishonoured (John v. 23; xv. 23). What we see everywhere is a close intermingling and interweaving, making a coherent whole, "I and the Father are one" (John x. 30). The boundaries between Him and God are obliterated.

In the Septuagint Jehovah was always rendered as Lord. The Christian community very early divided the two ancient titles of God, "Father" and "Lord," between God and Jesus. That meant much more than if they had occasionally called Jesus "God." But even this great thought was taken from a hint given by Jesus Himself (Matt. xxiii. 8-10), and from words used by His own lips (Mark xi. 3; John xiii. 14).

If this was the true situation, one is Father, and again one alone is Lord, Master, Leader, not only does it place these two in a uniquely close relationship to each other, but it also removes them equally distant from the world of men. Jesus could never bring Himself to speak of "our God" or "our Father," but only of "My God" and "your God," "My heavenly Father" (Matt. no 21, etc.), and "your heavenly Father" (Matt. v. 17, etc.). He and the Father could be spoken of in one breath, but never He and mankind, neither in speaking of His relationship to the Father nor His relationship to the world. He is the King's Son, all the rest are subjects (Matt. xvii. 25). He is the son and heir of the owner of the vineyard (the vineyard is the theocracy, Isa. v. 1 ff.), all the others are servants (Luke xx. 9, 13). He differentiates between men—there are good and bad (Matt. v. 45), friends and foes (Matt. v. 44), blessed and condemned (Matt. xxv. 34, 41), but He Himself stands in strong contrast to them all, feeling Himself to be a stranger and a sojourner among them (Mark ix. 19). It is only when dealing with very external matters that He uses

the word "we." Whenever He speaks of Himself the great contrast is apparent, as is also the solemnly exalted language.

When did this consciousness of being the Son originate in Jesus? It was without beginning. We must not confound the conception the disciples had of Him at first with His own self-consciousness. The disciples may have seen in Him to begin with a Man anointed with the Spirit of God, but Jesus' own consciousness never moved within the limits of such thoughts. The twelve-year-old Child used the same words, "My Father," as the dying Christ. The words He used on His early visit to the Temple are only the first glimpse known to us of a wonderful condition of soul. But it is quite a mistake to suppose that this was the moment when His consciousness of being the Son was born. As soon as the Child became aware of Himself, He recognized Himself as the Son.

We know that Buddha was sometimes beset with doubts about himself; while Mohammed even nursed thoughts of suicide at times. The Baptist became distrustful of the real meaning of his message. But it was not only in occasional hours of enthusiasm that Jesus was conscious of being the Son. The assurance did not come to Him in the supreme hours of His life, to disappear again when He reached the lower levels. Even at the end it was not shaken, but manifested itself once more with peculiar radiance (Luke xxiii. 43, 46). It was without end, as it had been without beginning.

If we consider how strict and exact all this Man's words were (Matt. v. 34, 37; xii. 36), how He Himself set limits to His actions (Matt. xx. 23) and His knowledge (Matt. xxiv. 36)—though no one could have put Him in the wrong—we realize what utter certainty there was in His constant consciousness of Sonship. In the hour of

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His greatest need He could substantiate it by oath (Matt. xxvi. 63 f.).

This consciousness went wonderfully far back—to the beginning of all existence, yes and further still. Jesus knew Himself to have been the object of divine love from eternity; He brought His sonship from heaven (John vi. 38, 46, 62; viii. 23, 42). In the depths of His consciousness there dwelt the prescience of a divine origin, of a primordial divine existence (Matt. xi. 27 also points to this). Thus He never considered that when His life on earth ended it would be followed by a reward (not even in the synoptic Gospels).¹ To Him it seemed quite natural that He should return whence He had come (John xiv. 12, 28; xvi. 10).

Jesus' consciousness of being the Son is without any human parallel. Some men have had the supreme consciousness of being prophets of God. But Mohammed himself, not to mention the prophets of Israel, openly confessed to his followers three months before his death, "I am a man as ye are." In a monarch we may meet with the proud conviction that he is king by the grace of God. In paganism it sometimes takes the form of a ruler believing himself to be the son of a god, by adoption or descent, and being considered by others to be a child of the gods. But in that case the god is debased, stepping down from his perfection into the ranks of men. In the case of Jesus, there is no such severing of the barriers between God and His creature; and besides, He did not look on God only as the "Almighty," but much more as the "Good" (Mark x. 18) and the "Perfect" one (Matt. v. 48). And this otherwise so humble Jesus, who was at all times so candid and sincere, was unhesitatingly sure throughout all the fearful vicissitudes of His life that He belonged to this good and perfect God as closely and intimately

¹ As Paul did (Phil. ii. 9) in the interest of edification.

as only a son can belong to his father. This consciousness is in fact something high and supernatural. We cannot enter into it, for it is impossible for man to do so. But what glory streams over to us from the Man to whom such a feeling was continually possible—possible in spite of His clearness of vision and the sobriety and humility of His spirit; possible although He never made it the foundation of selfish pretensions. It is indeed no small proof of the genuineness of this consciousness that it never sprang from the swampy, teeming bog of self-interest.¹

¹ How ready the Roman emperors and other pagan rulers were to make their own selfish use of being sons of the gods! It was indeed the strongest pillar of their thrones.

CHAPTER III

THE PROMISED MESSIAH

"EACH of us here, let the world go how it will, and be victorious or not victorious, has he not a life of his own to live? . . . For the saving of the world I would trust to the Maker of the world, and look a little to my own saving, which I am more competent to do." Jesus acted in direct opposition to this advice given by no less a person than Carlyle. Just because He—the only one—did not have to trouble about His own redemption, He knew Himself destined to be the Saviour of the world, the promised Messianic King. This consciousness of His calling was an important factor in His life. Again and again we hear echoes of it in different forms: "For this reason was I sent," "For this reason was I born," "For this reason came I into the world."

The Messianic King had been promised, and thus the world knew about Him. But men's conception of Him was that of a people born in a mine, who are told of the sun. Such a race, living underground, would imagine the sun to be like their own little lamps, or like the light of all the lamps they could collect together. They would stand contentedly in front of this heap of miners' lamps crying jubilantly, This is what the sun looks like! Yet the sun in the heavens is like anything but this dream of it, conceived far beneath the earth's surface. It was in this way that the people of Jesus' day dreamed of the Messiah, while Jesus was the real sun.

The Jewish world of that time had formed a very definite picture of the Messiah. Jesus took their conception as one takes an empty mould to fill it with new contents. It was an important fact that a whole nation was longing for the Messiah; otherwise the people would have had no capacity to grasp at all what Jesus' advent meant.

But, by the guidance of God, this longing for the Messiah prepared in the minds of men the necessary idea to which the new conception could be linked. We can put it like this: the hope of a Messiah which Israel cherished made the nation well-prepared ground, ready to receive the seed. But the seed sown in it did not conform to their expectations, and did not grow in the end from that soil.

What did grow from that soil was shattered by Jesus into a thousand fragments, as an ill-formed pitcher is broken by the potter. First of all, there was the idea of a national Messiah. Jesus' contemporaries—and without any doubt His disciples too—hoped that such a Messiah would set them free from the Romans, would establish the line of David setting up a kingdom with Jerusalem as the capital, would gather together the scattered remnants of Israel, and would bring about an endless life of gladness in the Holy Land. It cannot be denied that such hopes were nurtured by the prophetic writings, and thus Jesus partly destroyed the prophet picture of the Messiah when He declined to be a revolutionary, bearing the standard in the van of His people (John vi. 15).

But there was another current conception of the Messiah, and it too had not been formed without the help of the prophets. This was the figure of a supernatural Messiah, which took its place among the conceptions of a universal return of the dead, the judgement and transformation of the world, and the life everlasting. But this picture of a supernatural Messiah through whom God was to bring history to a close was also utterly destroyed by Jesus—and again, with it, part of the work of the prophets. The Son judged no one (John iii. 17; viii. 15; xii. 47), even though His forerunner expected it of Him (Matt. iii. 10–12). Rather was it to sinners that He was sent (Matt. ix. 13), and instead of bringing the end of all things, Jesus inaugurated a new beginning. "The Kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed into the ground" (Mark iv. 26 ff.).

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Others, such as Mohammed and Buddha, were the mature fruits of earlier ages and of religious development. Jesus, too, may be that to a certain degree; but much more is He the unsuspected beginning of a completely new development.

We have reminded our readers that, in demolishing the picture of a national and supernatural Messiah, Jesus destroyed part of the labours of the prophets; but this is only one side of His attitude to these great ones of history. On the other hand, He found in their prophecies material with which He could build. But how freely He used it, selecting and choosing out of what had been foretold! What had appeared supplementary, unimportant, and apparently fortuitous was given the chief place and made fundamental. In this respect also He behaved as one having authority, and He never took refuge merely in the current scheme of things. In Him we see the mystery of the germinating cell. In a way which we cannot comprehend it is able to attach to itself, as it grows, the most diverse substances. But the cell has to be there, for without it these substances would not take their particular form. That is just what happens with Jesus. Most of what we see in His person—and indeed all, if some skill is employed—can be found afterwards in the books of the prophets. But who could ever have put together this Messianic likeness out of the Scriptures? For that the mystery of the germinating cell was required, which mysteriously attaches to itself in living growth the most diverse substances.

They were indeed diverse! Two combinations were decisive in the formation of the new thing which here made its appearance. Jesus turned the ruler into a teacher, and merged the form of the Messianic King into the suffering servant of God (Isa. liii). What connection has a teacher with the conception of a king? Only this, that He Himself was the object and the centre of His teaching.

But is there any point of contact at all between a king and a servant—between one whose throne is in the heaven and one who has no place to lay His head? A king who dies on a tree? That was an absurdity from which men would turn in horror, if they had seen it before its fulfilment (Mark viii. 30; ix. 9). Thus this wonderful conception of the Messiah, the germinating cell, grew beneath the protection of two outer coverings.

Jesus spoke in parables, the aim of which was the Kingdom of God. But all His preaching of the Kingdom was ultimately veiled self-testimony. These parables of the Kingdom of God declare what Jesus brought to the world in His person. *He is* the Kingdom of God; and therefore, the Kingdom is like a king's son giving a wedding feast, like a sower, like the son of the owner of a vineyard demanding his inheritance (Matt. xxii. 2; xiii. 31; xxi. 37). Thus He spoke of His Messiahship, veiling His words, and beneath the veil there grew the germinating cell: the conception of a spiritual Messiah.

There was another outer covering to the cell, the designation "Son of man." It was Jesus' own designation of Himself. The Son of man means one who belongs to mankind, who is man. Naturally the expression does not mean a child of man like any other, but, on the contrary, one peculiar among all mankind. Israel knew of only one peculiar Son of man, whom Daniel had foretold (Dan. vii. 13). The term had not actually become a Messianic title in Judaism, yet it was a symbol which could occasionally be used to represent the Messiah. Did Jesus desire to be this Son of man? The question was raised by His designation of Himself as such, and at the same time Jesus did not disavow it. But this too was a serviceable protective covering.

Then came a day when the veils which up till then had been carefully retained were taken away. The Baptist had spoken quite clearly of the Messiah (Matt. iii. 11 f.; John i. 26 f.); Jesus hardly ever did so, yet men might observe and perceive who He was. He did not

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wish to tell them directly, He wanted to lead them to find it out for themselves. He strictly forbade His disciples, who had discovered His Messiahship, to speak to others of it (Mark viii. 30). The veil was still necessary. But a day approached when it was torn down. Then the great absurdity reached its climax on the Cross, and was vindicated by Easter morning. In those days Jesus rode publicly into Jerusalem as the Messiah and admitted His Messiahship before the high priest; for all the world was to know that the Man on the Cross was the suffering King.

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What was made visible on that day, after long, quiet, well-guarded growth, was apparently one of the greatest insanities in the history of the world—a Messiah who in His determining characteristics was no Messiah at all. Let us give the reasons.

The promised Messiah belonged to the conclusion and end of history, and here He was placed in the very middle of it.

The Messianic Kingdom was to burst into existence as a completed whole, by a cataclysmic, supernatural catastrophe. And behold, in a mysterious fashion it was already there, germinating and developing out of small beginnings (Luke xvii. 21; Mark iv. 26 ff.; Matt. xiii. 31).

Splendour and glory befitting a monarch were expected of the Messianic King. He was to accept the homage of His subjects. With a hitherto unheard-of revaluation of values, this Man turned the emphasis from external to internal things, determined that only His inner life should make Him the loveliest among the sons of men. To His subjects He became a servant—to the point of dying voluntarily for them (Matt. xx. 28). And while the Baptist, and with him his nation, believed that the question of sin would already be solved before the Messianic Kingdom was set up, this Man gave the banishment of sin a prominent place in His programme.

He clothed Himself with patience to such a degree that in the process the King became the Saviour.

The Messiah was to found an enduring kingdom, a kingdom of this world. For Israel it was to mean peace, joy, freedom. Jacob was to come at last to the long-desired position of power.¹ Jesus thought chiefly of God, not of men. For them there might be self-denial and cross-bearing (think of it—in the Kingdom of the Messiah!), but *Thy* name be hallowed, *Thy* will be done. He meant to lay the world at the feet of the Father—a work to be done to the honour of God, a deed performed in love by the Son for the Father. Where sin is, God is not ruler. Not the Romans, but sin and Satan with his armies, were the enemies against whom Jesus was to go forth. His Kingdom was not to be of this world and had nothing to do with politics. The Messianic hopes of the ideal kingdom of David were swept away and a purely religious kingdom set in the place of the popular and national one. He was to lead all hearts to righteousness and to the service of God after bestowing on them the highest gift of the peace of God. It was thought that this was only an introduction to His real Messiahship, and that there would follow divine glory, a place at the right hand of God, the appearance of angelic hosts on the earth, and the Last Judgement. But instead, He regarded His Messiahship as the setting up of righteousness on the earth. His sovereignty did not function by outward signs, but carried on its work hidden in the hearts of men (Luke xvii. 20). It was at work before the end came. Here was a Saviour who set up on earth a kingdom of purity.

The Messianic King, a long-expected figure, which was to belong to the end of time, was above all the hope of *Israel*, and particularly of the chauvinistic and belligerent section of the Jews of that age. This Man burst the bonds of Judaism and what He brought

¹ "The Kingdom of the Saints" (Dan. vii 18, 22). Jesus spoke only of the Kingdom of God.

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with Him was to be the salvation of all nations and peoples.

The king they expected was to set up his own kingdom. It was to come with mighty power without any aid from men, falling into their laps like an unexpected fortune. For the coming of His Kingdom this Man demanded the co-operation of men, and He declined to make use of force. The word was to be enough, a moral growth was to take place. He foresaw clearly how, in such circumstances, wheat and tares would grow side by side (Matt. xiii. 26); He grasped the incredible idea of a Messianic Kingdom in which His followers would suffer persecution. And instead of the Kingdom coming to mankind like a fortune overnight, it would have to be won by the greatest sacrifices (Matt. xiii. 44-46).

Mohammed gave his Arabs predatory campaigns, money, and plunder; Buddha gave his Indians dreams and visions—each gave to his followers what their souls desired. This Man gave them a Messiah who was a stumbling-block and a Kingdom of God that was to them like a blow in the face. Through Him the Messianic ideal was transformed in such a way that the high priest declared its realization would be blasphemy (Matt. xxvi. 65); even the Baptist had doubts about it (Matt. xi. 3); and His most trusted disciples could not comprehend it during Jesus' lifetime. Hardly had they got accustomed to one particular aspect of it when another fresh stumbling-block would appear (Mark viii. 31 f.), at the end becoming almost insurmountable (Matt. xxvi. 31). The Jews believed that the Messiah would make them the most envied people on earth, whereas one of Jesus' most faithful disciples frankly confessed that, if the hope of resurrection were excluded, His followers would be the men most to be pitied in the whole world (1 Cor. xv. 19). It is even more significant that Jesus Himself was soberly and clearly conscious that

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the Kingdom He brought was a mystery to human eyes (Matt. xiii. 11), and that the acceptance of Him as the Messiah went against flesh and blood. He knew that as the Messiah He was travelling a path which no man could understand unless by the working of God within him. When Simon Peter first confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, our Lord Himself judged that such knowledge must have come by means of nothing less than revelation (Matt. xvi. 17; [xi. 25; John vi. 44]).

But if this were the case, what did this Man mean, who dared to set up a Messianic likeness which could hope to find no acceptance by flesh and blood? Only in one way could it possibly be appreciated at its full worth: if every confession of this Messiahship, ridiculous as it seemed to the world, was brought about by the working of God, then the fact of its establishment must still more clearly signify divine operation, for it bore the unmistakable mark of divine foolishness (1 Cor. i. 25).

The consciousness that He was a son of David's line did not occupy a prominent place in Jesus' mind. His inner consciousness of being the Messiah sprang from the inexhaustible riches in the soul of one who was *the* Son. Only here was there room for such divine daring—for this irrational bond between weakness and strength (1 Cor. i. 25).

CHAPTER IV

HIS UNPRECEDENTED AUTHORITY

JESUS knew that as the king of salvation He was called to great things. Indeed, that which He felt Himself authorized to do was so unprecedented that it can only be explained by His consciousness of being the Messiah, and at the same time the conviction that He was the Son.

Let us say to begin with that Jesus knew He was justified in speaking of Himself, making Himself the subject of His preaching and thus drawing attention to Himself. There is no other man in the Bible who speaks so much of Himself as Jesus (e.g. Matt. xvi. 13-28): all the others pointed the way to God in quite a different fashion. But this Man recognized His own importance. The fact that He spoke of Himself so often in the third person ("the Son of man," "the Son") shows this. "Who say men that I am?"—in this way He made Himself an object of investigation. He took up two parables from the Old Testament (Ps. lxxx. 9 ff.: Isa. 5. 1 ff.; Prov. ix. 2 ff.), but only in such a way that He could adapt them to Himself (Matt. xxi. 33, 37; xxii. 2 ff.). His Sermon of the Kingdom, too, ends with Himself (Matt. v. 11). He is, indeed, the Kingdom (Matt. xii. 28; Mark x. 14). It was to Himself that He longed to gather the children of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii. 37); and if people would listen to His voice (John xviii. 37), His words (Matt. vii. 24), He was content. In His speech He excluded God in a way to which piety was not accustomed. Yet this most pious of all men might do so.

The source, too, from which His words flowed does not spring from the throne of God. "Thus saith the Lord" was the prophets' preface to their message. This Man dared to speak on His own authority, "But I say

unto you." He knew, too, that ultimately the Spirit would be linked to the authority peculiar to Him.

It has been pointed out that though the fact was only discovered later, all the turns of phrase in Matt. v. can be found in the Talmud. "Ye have heard," "it is said" (referring to oral teaching), "but I say." But what has this to do with Jesus' method? It did not enter His head to place Himself on the same footing with the disputing rabbis in the arguments of the Talmud. On the one side stand those of the old dispensation (Matt. v. 21), Moses and those who sit in Moses' seat (Matt. xxiii. 2), and on the other stands Jesus, quite alone. If we wish to grasp the full importance of His "But I say unto you," we must place it beside the prophetic formula, "Thus saith the Lord." To the prophets it signified something grand and great to be allowed to speak to others in the name of God. The prophet was proud of the fact that his word was God's word (Deut. xviii. 18; Jer. i. 9). But this Jesus borrowed nothing from the authority of His Father; it was to be enough for men that He should say, "I say unto you."

Jesus' use of the word "Amen" is significant (in our Bible translated as "verily"). The Amen was to be found in the Old Testament, but at the end of the sentence. It was the formula used in repeating the oath (Deut. xxvii. 15 ff.; Neh. v. 13), or the solemn confirmation of the liturgy (Ps. xli. 13; cvi. 48; 1 Chron. xvi. 36). But, in a way quite alien to all Jewish literature, Jesus placed the Amen solemnly at the beginning of the sentence, in the synoptic Gospels often just once (Matt. v. 18), but in John just as often He repeats it (John i. 51). What is the meaning of this? In Isaiah God is twice called the "God of the Amen" (lxv. 16). In Revelation Jesus is called "the Amen" (iii. 14). In Luke He Himself changes the word into "I tell you of a truth" (iv. 25), and in John we find His fundamental consciousness of Himself, "I am the truth" (xiv. 6). With His "Amen," Jesus removes His words out of the realms of dispute or

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doubt. It reminds us that He is truth. The truth is inborn in Him as it is in His Father. Even in their most solemn asseverations none of His apostles dared to imitate Him in this use of the word "Amen."

Thus we see that He may speak as from Himself; He is not only an agent, but the independent source of the divine word. He is to create the Scripture. He knows that He speaks the words of God (John iii. 34), and because of this He can confidently set His own words beside God's words, without drawing any boundary between them. If God calls heaven and earth as witnesses to His words (Isa. i. 2), Jesus, in the same way, claims all that have ears to hear (Matt. xi. 15; xiii. 9, 43). And when the prophet says of the word of God that, unlike all earthly things, it endureth for ever (Isa. xl. 6, 8), Jesus speaking of His own word confidently employs the same contrast of heaven and earth—they may pass away, but His word will remain (Luke xxi. 33).

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But Jesus' authority goes still further. It was not enough that He should speak on His own authority—once the mark of all false prophets (Jer. xxiii. 31, [16]; Ezek. xiii. 2). He was also to continue and perfect God's law. He speaks of "fulfilling" (Matt. v. 17), and means it in the sense of the gardener who perfects and fulfils the rose. It is not enough to describe Jesus' attitude in this regard as though He merely turned against the tradition of the scribes and against their additions to the law of Moses. No, He impugned Moses himself and thus apparently Him who had sent Moses. Was not the keeping of the Sabbath the fundamental law of the old covenant? Rabbi Eliezer makes Elia say to God, "Lord of the world, Thy children have two virtues—they observe the Sabbath and circumcision. They are worthy that Thou shouldest have compassion on them." To Moses the Sabbath was the eternal sign of the covenant between God and His people (Exod. xxxi. 16 f.). The prophets too could wax zealous

on this subject (Isa. lvi. 2). And what is Jesus' attitude to this crown of Judaism? He is so arbitrary, so sure of Himself (John v. 10 f.; cf. Neh. xiii. 17 ff.), for He is Lord also of the Sabbath, ordaining how this ordinance shall be kept (Mark ii. 28).

Or take the question of divorce. Here Jesus says distinctly (Matt. xix. 7, 9; v. 31) that the law of Moses, taking into consideration the hardness of men's hearts, had remained imperfect.

It is also in the law of Moses that the harsh maxim of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is to be found (Exod. xxi. 24 f.), and over this Jesus treads like a victor. Are not all the laws about food found in the Books of Moses? (Lev. xi. 4 ff.), and Jesus deprived them of their value for ever when He said, "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him" (Mark vii. 15). In the law of Moses also are to be found instructions about intercourse with lepers, those with an issue of blood, and so on (Lev. xiii.-xv.)—precepts which could never restrain the love of Jesus (Mark v. 25 ff.) It is a fact that in the Old Testament, the nation's enemies—that is, every foreigner—were free game (Lev. xix. 18—only of the tribesman—Deut. vii. 1 f.; xv. 3; xxv. 17-19), and that the Book of Psalms contains many cries for revenge (Ps. xxviii. 4; lxix. 23-26). It was something completely novel for Jesus to command men to love their enemies, even those outside the roof-tree of Israel (Luke x. 33). It was unheard-of that He should tell men to love their neighbour more than themselves (John xiii. 34; xv. 12, 13). Everywhere He put new wine into completely new bottles (Matt. ix. 17), everywhere we see the new rule of a new covenant (Matt. xxvi. 28).

Naturally Jesus knew that in thus opposing Moses He was not opposing His Father. Rather He realized that He was acting in accordance with God's most profound and secret thoughts, which Moses had been unable to grasp. But the unprecedented thing about Jesus' authority is that He uttered these thoughts of God as though

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they were His own. Where is there any mention of God in the passages quoted above? How very differently Moses spoke (Exod. xx. 1). Jesus is the sovereign, His proclamations stand by themselves. He knew that He could appear before men as the divine law-giver, taking the place of His Father. This is the case in the synoptic Gospels, with their "I say unto you," and exactly the same in John, where Jesus speaks of His "commandments" (John xiii. 34; xiv. 15, 21; xv. 10). And knowing this, the people were overcome by the feeling that here was one speaking with authority (Matt. vii. 29).

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But let us follow our study of the authority of Jesus in another direction where it is no less striking. I refer to the forgiveness of sins. Here His glory shines forth in two different respects—first of all in the surprising position which He ascribed to the forgiveness of sins in the governing plans of God.

What did man expect in this regard? Exactly what the Baptist had foretold: if he brought forth fruits worthy of repentance, God's forgiveness might follow (Luke iii. 7 f.). Otherwise God and His Messiah would slay the wicked with the breath of their lips (Isa. xi. 4). God's goodwill was always placed at the end, as a reward which had to be won. Here too there was a *jus talionis* (right of retaliation). The goal was reached by way of strict judgement; as the seed so shall the harvest be, as the performance so the reward. We are on the whole "hard" men and cannot think of God as being different from ourselves. Every other religion starts from the presumption that a man must be pure before he can approach God. The world does not believe either in the justice or the power of mercy. Forgiveness of sin contradicts the teaching of conscience. And now comes Jesus, making this very forgiveness one of the foundations of the Kingdom of God, making it in fact the determining principle by which God rules. Man's impotence is fathomed with

divine clearness ; with divine determination half measures are done away. Incredible things are offered out of the divine riches : God's goodwill is put at the beginning, the sinner is mercifully raised to be a child of God. In this way forgiveness is exalted into a principle, being made the lever which lifts man out of sin and error. This is not done in any spirit of leniency, as though sin were no great matter. Jesus never regarded forgiveness as something to be taken for granted, but always as something greatly wonderful. It is with the intention of combating sin, with the object of overcoming it, that forgiveness is made into a principle. Jesus was the first to recognize the power of forgiveness. The prophets indeed had spoken of it as a single act of God, to take place in the Messianic Age, but with Jesus it became something fundamental and enduring, and, in fact, the real *wisdom* of the whole procedure. That is in contrast to all human ideas, it is past finding out, it is divinely great. The Pharisees found it a stumbling-block, taking exception to Paul too because he had recognized and grasped that this was God's nature. The Roman Catholic Church has become a great contradiction of God's dealing in this respect. From the time of Paul until Luther no one fully comprehended God's method—this method which goes so far beyond all human thought that it can never have been invented by any "hard" human heart.

Whence had Jesus the authority to proclaim so merciful a God? It was something so incredible, especially to the tender conscience. He knew the Father. No other could have the right to tell to the world the parable of the prodigal son or of the publican, only He could do so, because He knew God's mind. Nay more, He knew that He Himself, in the service of the Father, was to lay the foundation of the forgiveness of sin in a mysterious way by His blood, that the righteous judgement of sinners should be averted. Thus, from His lips these stories are credible, though they would be received with suspicion

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from anyone else. For, regarded from a human point of view, they tell of something that cannot be. But it is this very fact—that such an idea is contrary to the logic of conscience and is thus beyond human conception—that gives us the assurance that it is divine.

* * * * *

Jesus did not only feel Himself entitled to proclaim to the widest extent the incredible forgiveness of God, He went further; for He Himself forgave sins. And again, He did so entirely in His own name, without mentioning the name of God.

Think of the man sick of the palsy, lying on his bed before Jesus. Our Lord did not merely make use of this youth to proclaim the general principle of forgiveness. If He had used an expression such as Nathan did before David, "The Lord hath put away thy sin" (2 Sam. xii. 13), no one would have raised any objection. But Jesus forgave sin on His own authority, without mentioning God at all. Any man who understands what forgiveness of sin means, and at the same time classes Jesus with ordinary men, must surely be taken aback by this. Following this presumption the Pharisees exclaimed quite rightly, "This Man blasphemeth" (Matt. ix. 3). Jesus did indeed claim rights which belong to God alone and which Judaism had never dared to attribute even to the Messiah, for in the Messianic Age forgiveness was to remain the prerogative of God (Isa. xliii. 25; Jer. xxxi. 34; Ezek. xxxvi. 25). When He perceived the Pharisees' alarm Jesus did not amend His words; He did not try to show the scribes their error when they asked, perfectly justly, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke v. 21). He only provided them with the proof that He was so fully one with God that He had authority to pursue even this work of His on the earth. According to His own words, it was to demonstrate this truth that He healed the palsied man (Mark ii. 10).

Jesus' treatment of the woman who was a sinner is

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on exactly the same level of His consciousness of self. Here again, as can be seen by their words and behaviour, the people took exception to His forgiving sins in His own name. For He allowed men to express their gratitude for the gift to Himself. The explanatory parable of the usurer, also, only illustrated the measure of thanks due to Him. But the undeniable reverse of this was that the gift, too, must seem to come from Jesus.

In His last hour on earth Jesus gave one of the two thieves the assurance of mercy (Luke xxiii. 43). Mercy is a divine prerogative, and when we see Jesus thus exercising it we recognize again the royal freedom of one who is the Son. "What things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John v. 19).

And at the end, He dared even to bequeath to His Church this authority to forgive sins (Matt. xviii. 18; [xvi. 19]; John xx. 23).

* * * * *

Both Mohammed and Buddha, as persons, can be left out of the religions they founded. Just before his death, Buddha said to Ananda, his favourite disciple, "The doctrine and the laws, O Ananda, which I have taught and proclaimed unto you, they shall be your master when I have left you." And when the master departed, his followers got on without him, for no man is indispensable. Jesus alone can place Himself alongside the indispensable God. He bears no resemblance to the prophet, who retires behind his work, but He carries on the work into eternity. His mission was to spread from one person to another, and so He heedlessly left the world without a written word. What care Mohammed expended on this! But Jesus knew that when He should be exalted into heaven, He would still carry on His work—He Himself, only by new methods and with a wider scope. He would be everlastingly present in person (Matt. xviii. 20; John xiv. 23), and the power and glory of God were to be His (Mark xii. 36; xiv. 62). At the last He was

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to come again to satisfy the desire of His people (Luke xvii. 22, 24), as the bridegroom satisfies the longing of the bride on the wedding day (Matt. xxii. 2; xxv. 1). Thus the Church was to be bound irretrievably to the person of Jesus as to God Himself. Jesus could put the two frankly side by side—"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." For He stood by the side of the eternal God.

Jesus tells us still further why He may call Himself indispensable to His Church. Those who are weary and heavy laden, the distressed and disquieted, are to be refreshed from His personal strength (Matt. xi. 28). He can "transform the scoundrel into a proper man." He does not attempt to do so by means of the prophets' warnings. What help would they be? When He compares Himself to a physician, He does not mean to confine His medical activities to prescribing some moral diet. Such a prescription anyhow would be of little value; besides, a note could be made of it, and then He Himself might be dispensed with. By a wealth of deeds He proclaims that He has vanquished the strong. Thus He brings power, and makes distribution of His own riches. It is in this way that He transforms the scoundrel into a proper man. He knows the art of grafting a sound tree (Matt. xii. 33), and of making man a new creation (Luke xix. 5 ff.). The novelty is this: He leads men to the Father and Himself helps them to a higher righteousness than that of the Pharisees.

Think of all the Johannine parables which bring out how indispensable Jesus is. He is the way (John xiv. 6; Matt. xi. 27), and so we must needs follow Him. He is the way because, as He is the bearer of truth, so He is the mediator of life (John xiv. 6); He is the door (x. 9), and that too is indispensable. He is the true bread of heaven (vi. 51), and thus the deepest hunger must find satisfaction in Him (Matt. v. 6; xi. 28). He is the light shining in the darkness (John viii. 12), and so everyone needs Him. He is the vine (xv. 1), and every branch that abideth not in Him is lost. He puts everyone else

into the position of children. Through a strong personal life—His life—they must let themselves be borne above that which they are of themselves. Without Him they can do nothing (John xv. 5).

He makes the Holy Spirit, which was known from the Old Testament, wholly dependent on Himself (John xiv. 26; xv. 26). When the disciples spoke later on of the "Spirit of Christ" or the "Spirit of the Lord," they were acting according to His instructions, and as He gives the Spirit to His own, so He is the mediator of their prayers (Matt. xviii. 19 f.). Everywhere He ascribes a healing and mediatory significance to His own person. He helps His followers to the right religious point of view and to their religious inheritance, and in so doing—very different from other founders of religion—He becomes their Saviour. Indeed, He Himself is our religious heritage, for in Him we find rest (Matt. xi. 29). That may well be the climax of His indispensableness for mankind.

It is fitting in this connection to think also of the institution of the Lord's Supper. It is clear that in that hour the bread and wine were to symbolize His death. But another fact should be made clear too: that the real emphasis lies on the offering as body and blood, and on the enjoyment of it as such. It was to signify a blessing to His people. In that age both Jews and Gentiles were convinced that man entered into union with the divinity by means of sacrifice.¹ Now, Jesus' sacrifice was His life given up to death; and bread and wine represented this life. He could look on the salvation sent to man by God as being combined in His person: forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit. So, in the Supper, He offers a union with His own person; in the Sacrament His Spirit, His heavenly personality, enters into the Christian. Jesus makes His abode in us (John xiv. 23), and how indispensable that makes Him to us!

It is sometimes suggested that the so-called preaching of the Kingdom makes Jesus appear less essential. But

¹ This appears as a self-evident assumption in 1 Cor. x. 14-21.

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such a conception does not do justice to the facts. Jesus Himself is the Kingdom. Origen spoke of an "Auto-basilica" (self-kingdom). The Kingdom came with the advent of Jesus (Matt. xi. 11 f.); where He is, there it is also (Luke xvii. 21). It is He alone who builds the Kingdom, and He Himself will lead it to fulfilment in the end. He bears always in Himself the strength and power of the Kingdom. There can be no doubt that His work from beginning to end had this aim in view, that the preaching of the Kingdom should consequently be commuted for ever into the preaching of Himself as Saviour. It is an historical fact that, immediately after Jesus' death, His messengers recognized that they were called by Him to be witnesses of the significance of His salvation and not merely spokesmen of His Galilean preaching. He Himself was indispensable, and He revealed this to His followers very early in His career, by His preaching about the Kingdom.

My readers may have noticed that another very significant fact has thus been made clear: Jesus was conscious that in very actual functions He could put Himself in place of God. He said of Himself what the Scriptures said of God. He was to be very close to His people, as God was (Ps. cxxxix; Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20). Always, even unto the end of the world, like the eternal God (Matt. xxviii. 20). In exactly the same way as God He was to refresh "every" hungry soul (Jer. xxxi. 25; Matt. xi. 28; Ps. xxiii. 3). He took into His own hands God's prophecy about treading on serpents (Ps. xci. 13; Luke x. 19). Like God too, He kept the covenant of His peace with His people (Isa. liv. 10; John xiv. 27). He even foretold that the souls of men should find rest in Him, as in the Father (Jer. vi. 16; Matt. xi. 29). Jesus' authority was so wide and extensive that He could account Himself equally indispensable with the Father.

* * * * *

It was Isaiah who heard God asking, "Whom shall I

send?" (vi. 8). From the beginning it had been one of the sovereign rights of the God of Israel to send forth His messengers. There was a long line of prophets, and Jesus recognized that He too was sent from God. Yet here again He puts Himself very close to the Father, taking God's sovereign right to Himself and saying, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21). He is not inclined to regard His mission as less worthy than that of His Father. He had inspired and given to His people a long succession of prophets, wise men, and scribes, and Jesus can attribute exactly the same power to Himself—"Behold I send unto you prophets, wise men, and scribes" (Matt. xxiii. 34).¹ He may raise His disciples to be what God's ambassadors had once been to mankind—the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. v. 13 f.).

Jesus' consciousness when He sent out His messengers is directly that of the God of Israel in the same circumstances, when He said to His prophet, "I ordained thee" (Jer. i. 5). Jesus often speaks of choosing and selecting the Twelve (John vi. 70; [Luke vi. 13]; John xiii. 18; xv. 16). God spoke to the prophet, saying, "Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee" (Jer. i. 7), and in exactly the same way Jesus says to His messengers, "Go not into . . . but go rather . . ." (Matt. x. 5). Then God said, "Behold I have put My words into thy mouth" (Jer. i. 9), and here Jesus acts in a precisely similar way, "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light. Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. x. 27; xxviii. 20). Then God comforted and upheld Jeremiah when He said, "Fear not, for I am with thee to deliver thee" (Jer. i. 8), and again Jesus speaks in the same way, "Let not your heart be *troubled*" (John xiv. 1; [xvi. 33]); "Lo, I am with you alway" (Matt. xxviii. 20).²

¹ In Matt. v. 12; vii. 22, He gives His disciples the name of prophet.

² Does John i. 42 go still further? "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee," said God to Jeremiah (i. 5). "Thou art Simon,

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Jesus was at liberty to send out His messengers in exactly the same way as God did; and very early in His career He began to prepare for this. It was because He had this missionary project in mind that He gathered the Twelve together, at once making them into a sort of family (Mark iii. 14) and, in spite of many difficulties, bestowing much attention on their instruction. He always had before His eyes the fact that in the future they were to be His messengers.

If Jesus might send forth His messengers as God did, so, like Him, He might send to whom He willed. At the beginning He sent to Israel (Matt. x. 5 f.); then He began to say more and more clearly, Israel is no longer to be the messengers' objective, she is to be cast out (Matt. viii. 12; xi. 20 ff.; xii. 39 ff.; xxi. 41; xxii. 7; xxiii. 34 ff.; xxiv. 2; Luke xiii. 28). So, in spite of their patriotism, His disciples were to make their escape when judgement came upon Jerusalem (Mark xiii. 14), because their duty as disciples went beyond Israel. That Jerusalem should be cast out was an unheard-of idea. The rabbis taught that God had said, "I will spread for you a great table in the world to come, and the Gentiles shall see it and shall burst with envy." And Jesus turned it exactly the other way round (Luke xiii. 28). The prophets, too, had often proclaimed Israel's world-mission to be the light of the Gentiles. And now Jesus deposed them from their mission, and at the same time He sent His messengers to the Gentiles.

Jesus Himself did not seek to extend His activity beyond His own people (Matt. x. 6; xv. 24; xix. 28); but He did not turn away those Gentiles who came to Him (Matt. viii. 13; xv. 28). Indeed, where the door stood open, as in Samaria (John iv. 35, 40), He was at once ready to work in a foreign country. He has explained

the son of Jonas," says Jesus to Peter (direct knowledge, cf. v. 48). "Behold I have made thee this day a defenced city and brazen walls" (Jer. i. 18). "Thou shalt be called Cephas, that is a stone," says Jesus to Peter.

to us why He refrained, in the parable of the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying (John xii. 24).¹ But from the first He had the Gentiles in mind (Matt. x. 18; John x. 16; xii. 23, 32).² He constantly spoke of their being called (Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiv. 23; xx. 16). The ends of the earth were the only limits set to His evangel (Matt. xxiv. 14; xxvi. 13; Mark xiii. 10); and He led His disciples to hope for a field of activity greater than His own (John iv. 38; xiv. 12). It was the natural conclusion to all these ideas that He should at last send His disciples directly to the Gentiles (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15 f.; Luke xxiv. 47 f.; John xx. 21; Acts i. 8).

Jesus might do this tremendous thing: not only did He extend the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles, in spite of Jewish opposition, but He gave them the seat of honour in place of the Jews. It is an historical fact that it was He who did this, and not one of His disciples later on. The two communal acts, baptism and the Lord's Supper, the common use of which is proof that they were founded by Jesus, make it apparent that He had in view a close community of His disciples outside of the synagogue, and this idea is strengthened by the fact that although the Master had kept aloof from the Gentile world after His resurrection, the disciples very quickly and unanimously started on their mission to the heathen. Finally it is very evident that it was not compassion which drove Paul to the Gentiles, but only obedience to the commands of Jesus which, in sharpest paradox, blocked the way he had intended to take. Jesus might do such unreasonable things; and He might do them of Himself.

There is one more thing we must lay our finger on if we are to realize the greatness of the authority we have

¹ He must first be freed from the limitations of His earthly life, then He would begin to gather together the children of God from among the Gentiles.

² The story of the temptation shows clearly that He had the whole world in view. Only the way in which men were to be won received a check at this point (Matt. iv. 8 ff.).

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been studying. Jesus was not content merely to send forth His missionaries; but He Himself remains in the background, dominating the messengers and remaining the Master of them all. It is He who is to receive a kingdom "in a far country" (Luke xix. 12); He it is to whom the "other" sheep belong (John x. 12); yes, it is ultimately He who sees to it that they are brought into the fold (v. 16). And there is something still greater to be added: He, the sender, sends Himself. He is indissolubly bound up with His evangel (Matt. xxvi. 13);¹ His messengers bear Him as witness with them (Matt. x. 18, 22; xxviii. 18).² And here lies the most profound reason why Jesus sent forth His messengers *after* the resurrection: only then was He the "finished" Christ, His work and His person were fulfilled. Now He might send forth His messengers and Himself with them. Now He might know, and did know, that the world was His field (John xii. 32).³

* * * *

The success He achieved during His admittedly very short period of activity was terribly small. He gained a few hundred followers, in His own eyes a little flock (Luke xii. 32). At the time of their deaths, Buddha and Mohammed had a very different number of adherents. His aim—the winning of hearts—was so vast, and with such a goal in view mass conversion is impossible. How easy Mohammed made things for his followers—a repetition of the formula, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet," was all that was required;

¹ Mary can never be forgotten, just because she is linked with Him.

² "Make disciples of all!"

³ No other founder of religion ever dared to cast his thoughts so wide afield. Mohammed suited his teaching to the Arabs, Buddha his to the Indians. Even the most enlightened of Israel's prophets expected only that all nations would one day become Jews. This Man alone knew Himself destined to be the possession of all peoples and nations.

or Buddha, with his facile phrase, "I take refuge in Buddha, his doctrine, and the congregation." Jesus did not even use constraint or force of any kind, He established no rules or orders for the future.¹ There was nothing but His word and His love. Yet He never doubted that His cause would be victorious. When it looked as though everything were lost He cried, "It is finished!" He was absolutely convinced that the Kingdom was to come with Him and that He was to overthrow all hostile forces. He, the outcast, was yet the corner-stone (Mark xii. 10). He, the Crucified One, had conquered the world (John xvi. 33). Now He might set Himself down at God's right hand; for after He had given His life as a ransom for sin, He would assuredly "reign." He was always able to live without care in the present just because He was so sure of the future. He will live and He will conquer—not only His cause, but He Himself, as He has already conquered (Matt. xii. 29; Luke x. 18). For in this respect, too, He may at all times set Himself by the side of God, to whom belongeth victory (Mark xiv. 62).

* * * * *

Jesus knew that He possessed authority which should ultimately assure His victory and reveal Him to the world; the judgement of the world was placed in His hands, and with it the fulfilment of all things (Matt. vii. 22 f.; xvi. 27; xix. 28; xxv. 21, 31 f.; Luke xx. 18; John v. 28). But the judgement was not to stand at the beginning of His Messiahship, as was expected, but at the end (Matt. iii. 10, 12).

Jesus is to judge the world, and for this judgement He borrows the colours of the prophesied judgement of Jehovah. He takes the dreadful heavenly signs of the great day of Jehovah (Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4; Joel ii. 10; Zeph. i. 15; Hag. ii. 6; Mal. iv. 1), and applies them

¹ He did not even make arrangements as to how the Gentiles were to be received into His Kingdom (Acts x. 15; John xvi. 12 f.).

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to His own day (Luke xxi. 26). And if He is the "One like unto the Son of man coming before God with the clouds of heaven," as Daniel depicted (vii. 13; Matt. xxiv. 30), He borrows also many characteristics from the Ancient of days with snow-white hair, sitting on the throne of judgement and surrounded by hosts of angels (Dan. vii. 9 f.). God's angels become His (Matt. xxiv. 31; xxv. 31 ff.); and, with the righteousness of God, He gives to each man according to his works (Matt. xvi. 27; Ps. lxii. 12; Prov. xxiv. 12). Thus He dares to make His judgement equal to the judgement of God.

Here we are dealing with something we can hardly grasp. That is why Jesus only spoke of it in pictures such as the Old Testament prophecy offered Him. We know of other predictions of Jesus which failed to find the comprehension He hoped for from the disciples. These were the predictions of His death, of His resurrection, and of His Second Coming. There was nothing about these facts in the Messianic dogma of Judaism. Jesus repeated these three difficult predictions often, partly in the form of a formula, so that they should at least be impressed on the memory of His followers. And yet how easily misunderstanding could arise! Two of the predictions were recalled to the disciples' memory by actual facts, and these may possibly have influenced the telling of them later.¹ But the prophecy of the Second Coming did not receive this confirmation, and when it was handed on in a misunderstood or distorted form, it was not restored or corrected. The telling of it is most correctly preserved in the parables of the Second Coming. There emphasis is laid particularly on the fact that it would be postponed for an unexpectedly long period, though men hoped that it was close at hand.²

¹ Thus the original, inexact "after three days" in Mark viii. 31; x. 34, was changed by Matthew after the events of Easter into "on the third day" (xvi. 21; xvii. 23; xx. 19), and Luke (ix. 22; xviii. 33).

² (Matt. xxiv. 48; xxv. 5, 19; Luke xii. 38.) According to the

To Jesus Himself these current ideas of the judgement of the world must have been a very paltry symbol of the indescribable and heavenly reality. In His preaching He avoided any flight of fancy in describing how it was to come and how it was to be fulfilled, bringing each description only down to the point when He Himself should appear. For the eyes of His disciples were to be fixed exclusively on Him.¹ Their chief duty was to realize in time that He was near (Matt. xxiv. 32 f.). It was so that they might be constantly on the watch that the time and hour were not told them (Luke xii. 36;—the echo: 1 Cor. i. 7; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. ix. 28); they were to be prepared to receive Him at any moment (Matt. xxiv. 42, 44; xxv. 13). He made Himself the central figure of that day as the Lord who would call His household to account (Matt. xxiv. 46), as the king who would determine the reward of his subjects, as the bridegroom for whose followers the time of rejoicing would begin (Matt. xxv. 1, 34).

Jesus took still more upon Himself. He was to be the standard in the judgement of the world, men were to be measured by Him, He Himself was to appraise them—ultimately by their attitude towards Himself. Here, and not in their attitude towards the law, lies the determining factor in the actions of men which will lead to retribution (Matt. xvi. 27). Everything will depend on whether a man has believed on Him (Matt. viii. 10 ff.), whether he has made sacrifices for His sake (Matt. xix. 28),

reckoning of the Talmud it was to be only three night watches. Add to this the many exhortations to wait and watch (Matt. xxiv. 42, 43; xxv. 13; Luke xii. 36 f., 39), and His expectation that the disciples' hopes of temporal power and enjoyment would lapse in the absence of their Lord (Luke xii. 45).

¹ That this was very much the case in the early days of Christianity is shown by the rescued Aramaic hieroglyphic, "Marana tha" (Come, our Lord) (1 Cor. xvi. 22; Rev. xxii. 20). This is also a rock of defence against those who do not believe that the hope of the Second Coming was one of the central beliefs of the first congregation of disciples.

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whether he has confessed Him (Matt. x. 32) and served Him in serving His members, that is, His disciples (Matt. x. 42; xviii. 5; xxv. 45). The determining factor is man's attitude towards Him, and it is according to this that he will be judged.

And, wonderful to relate, the sentence too is concerned with Him. What will be decided is whether we shall be allowed to remain with Him or be separated from Him. Where He is, there shall His servants be also (John xii. 26). "Come, ye blessed of My Father" (Matt. xxv. 34) He says to some; "Depart from Me, ye cursed" (Matt. vii. 23; xxv. 41), He says to the others. The judgement is accomplished in Him: companionship with or separation from Him—and both for eternity.

What Jesus says of His position as judge is credible; He already acts as a criterion. He began to judge while He was still on earth—contrary to what He allowed His disciples to do (Matt. vii. 1; John ix. 2 f.)—passing sentence and also pardoning (Matt. ix. 2; [John ix. 2 f.]; John v. 14)—the man sick of the palsy, the chief of the publicans, the woman who was a great sinner, and finally as He was dying, the thief on the cross (Matt. ix; Luke xix; vii. 48; xxiii. 43). He pronounced judgement too, condemning the three cities on the Lake of Galilee, and Jerusalem (Matt. xi. 21 ff.; Luke x. 12 ff.—Matt. xxii. 7; xxiv. 2). Such condemnations should not be debased to the point of view of a threat. With effective power He condemned these four cities in exactly the same way as He cursed the fig tree (Mark xi. 20). He was indeed a judge who took His judgements to heart, condemning with tears (Luke xix. 41). Yet His condemnation remained. It was condemnation too when He assailed the hardness of heart of those who would not understand His parables, likening these to the fast-closed door (Matt. xiii. 13), though to those who searched in simplicity they were a gift of mercy, and to the faith that made them a part

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of its own experience they were clear and distinct.¹ It was also a condemnation when He kept silence over men's lack of a sense of truth (Mark xi. 33; Matt. xxvi. 62). There is no irritated tone of bitterness in Matt. xxiii, but rather is there the moving earnestness of the judge. He consciously applied the fundamental law of divine and righteous punishment; those who do not wish to understand the truth will reach a point when they cannot understand (Isa. vi. 9 f.). With deep seriousness He enforced the holy law: sin is to be punished by sin—that is, the sinner will sink more and more deeply into sin. While the prophets warned and threatened to the end, Jesus prompted the traitor on whom He had already passed final judgement (Matt. xxvi. 24), saying, "That thou doest, do quickly" (John xiii. 27).

In the Book of Psalms we constantly read that God is judge. Jesus knew that this prerogative peculiar to God was His also.

In our own day much has been said about the mature Messianic faith possessed by Judaism in the time of Jesus. As far as this was the case it should be considered as divine leading. In this way men's thoughts were turned towards Jesus before His advent. But is there not a possibility that a zealot slipped into the existing scheme falsely claiming for himself what men were expecting? And is there not the other possibility, that the memory of a really great man was afterwards adorned in gratitude with qualities taken from men's expectations?

The Messianic expectation can be likened to the object or piece of clothing in the fairy tale or in folklore, which fits no one until the person who has a right to it comes along. There were men who slipped into the king's robe unbidden, on their own authority. But they did not notice which was the royal robe and which merely the

¹ The interpretation was added to experience. "To him that hath shall be given" (Matt. xiii. 12).

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outer covering, clothing themselves in what should only have been taken off. They were full of human failings which were very quickly revealed as such—vanity, self-seeking, the desire for revenge and power. What is the sure proof that Jesus was the Chosen One? Surely the assurance with which He found the royal robe, throwing aside the coverings and veils which lay over and beside it. What was human fell away, and what finally appeared before our eyes was the purity of God.

We have already quoted the remark of an historian, "Power is always evil." That is an accepted rule in this world. Power which has the impress of the world will be and must be evil, for it cannot rid itself of the taint. In Jesus we are brought face to face with power which is always good and which purified the Messianic faith of the age from the dross of evil. But it becomes incontestably clear that we see here one who did not only set Himself by His own power by the side of God, slipping into the Messianic scheme, but one who really does stand by God's side. For He is good as God is good—even in His power He is goodness.

CHAPTER V

THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF HIS PRETENSIONS

IF Jesus' consciousness of self comprised all that we have been discussing in the last four chapters, it cannot be wondered at that His estimate of Himself was very great. This self-estimate is expressed in various and often surprising ways.

The fact that John was allowed to be His herald, "the messenger before His face," made him "the greatest among them that are born of women" (Matt. xi. 11). Because Judas betrayed Him it were better for him that he had never been born (Matt. xxvi. 24). Everything done to His followers, whether good or bad, was magnified by the fact that it was done at the same time to Him. If it had been done to His disciples only, it would not have had nearly so much significance; but now even the cup of cold water was not forgotten (Mark ix. 41); and when one city refused to receive His disciples its behaviour called down on it a fate worse than that of Sodom (Matt. x. 15). He who received Him received God (Mark ix. 37); it were better for the man who offended Him that he should die a terrible death (Mark ix. 42). The temptation to deny Him was to be guarded against by prayer (Matt. xxvi. 41). It was not necessary that He should give His messengers special preparation for their work; the frank and constant intercourse which He accorded a man must fully fit Him for such labour. His estimate of Himself was such that He was sure that Abraham rejoiced to see His day (John viii. 56); many prophets and righteous men had longed for Him, but the eyes and ears of His disciples were blessed, in that they saw and heard Him (Matt. xiii. 16). His presence was a cause for rejoicing, and for a new outlook on life, like that experienced on a wedding day (Matt. ix. 14).

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Not to see Him was punishment (Matt. xxiii. 39), but the man who recognizes Him is to be counted blessed (Matt. xvi. 17). He who is despised for His sake may confidently take his place among the prophets who were persecuted for the sake of Jehovah (Matt. v. 11 f.). Salvation comes to the house into which He enters (Luke xix. 9), and a city which sees His acts is thus exalted to heaven (Luke x. 15). He is greater than any of the figures of the Old Testament (Matt. xii. 41; xxii. 45), and loftier than its greatest ordinances (Matt. xii. 6, 8). But He cannot seek for a successor from among mankind as did those great men, Moses and Elias; the Spirit of God alone can be His representative (John xiv. 16)

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Jesus' estimate of Himself led Him to make claims which no one else could ever make. He demanded faith. In saying this, we do not mean that He demanded belief in His words—every prophet has done that. Nor are we thinking of the fact that He demanded belief in His miraculous powers (Matt. ix. 2, 28; xv. 28; Mark v. 34, 36; ix. 23; x. 52). That too would only be following the line taken by the prophets (Isa. vii. 11). It may be said with regard to both of these that the prophets of Israel as well as the founders of religion throughout the world have all demanded belief in themselves. We are told that even the expression, "Believe in me," is often to be found in the mouths of the founders of religions. But Jesus' claim went further than this: it was not enough that men should believe in His word and in His ability; He was not a messenger who would sink into obscurity, His office once accomplished. He is of value in Himself. Indeed He is ultimately more precious than either His words or His deeds. In a sense this is true of every human soul, which is always more valuable than what it achieves or creates. But in this case it is otherwise—this messenger of God, unlike all other prophets and founders of religion, has in His own person a greater value *for us* than His words

and actions. Thus Jesus demanded belief in Himself, and that men should be united to His person. There are many incidents which prove that His claims went as far as this. We are only once told that Jesus regarded a man with astonished delight because of his belief. Where was this and why? A Gentile centurion in Capernaum had not only manifested his belief in Jesus' miraculous ability but also in His miraculous person—even though this belief may have been mixed with pagan superstition, as in a son of the gods with spirits at His disposal, who could not therefore be invited to his house. Jesus praised this man greatly. But in doing so He showed us that He does desire belief in His person (Matt. viii. 9 ff.).¹

Or think of Peter. What was it that was to change him into a rock? Not any belief in Jesus' words or actions but belief in His person. Was not the Church to be founded on this faith alone? (Matt. xvi. 16 ff.). Further what was the faith that Jesus prayed that Peter might have, which should not fail? (Luke xxii. 32). What turned Peter into a traitor? and what was the faith he regained and in doing so was received back as an apostle? Finally, what is the faith which Jesus will look for again on the earth, and does not expect to find in any measure, even when He returns? (Luke xviii. 8). In all these cases the answer is, a belief in His own person, and thus a belief which no other founder of religion has ever claimed for himself. The fate of a man on the day of judgement is to depend on this faith (Matt. x. 32); and the man who has already gained it is accounted blessed (Matt. xi. 6). No other man has ever been so concerned by what was said about Him and no one has ever urged men as He did to confess their judgement of Him. He forced Peter's confession (Matt. xvi. 15). Indeed, it can be said that the whole aim of the instruction He gave to His disciples was to

¹ When He met again the blind man who had been cast out by the Pharisees, He regarded it as His chief duty to lead him to a belief in His person (John ix. 35 ff.).

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make them believe in Him. If that had not been the case, He would not have required to be so anxious to guard them against being misled by what was to happen to Him (Mark viii. 31; ix. 30 ff.; x. 32 ff.). Did death give the lie to the truth of His words? Other men have sometimes had their words confirmed by death. Death could confuse His disciples only in regard to His supernatural and eternal claims; only the particular significance of His person and their attitude towards it could be shadowed by it, nothing else. And it was because this would have been a fatal thing that Jesus spent so much care and time on the teaching which should accustom them to His death. For the aim and end of it was to be belief in Him as the Lord, that is, in Him who is the Son, and therefore the Messiah for the whole world.

This faith which He claimed bears all the marks of the faith claimed by God. First of all Jesus desired a believing acceptance. Men were to surrender themselves as completely as the brood of a hen depend on their mother (Matt. xxiii. 37), letting Him assuage all their deepest longing and unrest (Matt. xi. 28; John vii. 37). In allowing Him to serve them without protest they were to win fellowship with Him and have a part in Him (Mark x. 45; John xiii. 4 ff.). To listen to Him was that good part which a man may choose for himself (Luke x. 42). Belief is always receptive, and Jesus demanded that He should be received by His followers as children receive gifts from their parents (Matt. xviii. 3). We are told that a soul is strengthened by continually coming into touch with God afresh. Well, Jesus demanded the same behaviour towards Himself; His followers were to be in continual touch with Him so that they might bring forth fruit (John xv. 4). Baptism in His name, which was a custom practised immediately after His resurrection (Acts ii. 38), and thus necessarily established by Him, implies that belief in Him as Saviour was to

bring forgiveness. Thus belief in Jesus bears the mark of believing acceptance.

But at the same time it bears the mark of believing trust. If a man believes His word, he should do so without signs and wonders, in the face of all probability, and even in the midst of bitter disappointment. Jesus could rebuke men for being afraid of the storm in His presence (Matt. viii. 25 ff.), and particularly He chided them because their vision of Him was not clear enough for them to realize that no fear of want should disturb them when He was there (Mark. viii. 17 ff.). "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me"—surely no one could ever set himself more distinctly on an equality with God (John xiv. 1).

Finally, the belief which Jesus demanded had also the mark of believing devotion. His Church was to be as closely bound to Him as a wife is to her husband (Matt. xxii. 2). Only God demands, as Jesus did, the highest from man—his heart. The yoke is the symbol of guidance and restraint. Sirach uses it of divine wisdom (li. 26; Jer. ii. 20; v. 5, of God). Jesus spoke quite frankly of His yoke, demanding that men should bear it (Matt. xi. 29). They were to put themselves under Him, as the only religious leader and teacher of mankind (Matt. xxiii. 8 ff.). It was not enough to keep His commandments; the determining factor was that men should cleave to Himself. Jesus demands discipleship, and that means that men should follow Him as their leader (Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24; John viii. 12; xii. 26); though not of course in any literal or local sense, for such a thing would not be possible. What does this symbol mean? Surely not merely an imitation of His mode of living? The idea is much more that of a Lord who exercises His power over His people, and to whom they should subject themselves (John x. 4).¹ He demanded everything from His disciples

¹ Thus "baptism in the name of Jesus" signifies that the person baptized belongs to Jesus and becomes His property. In future Jesus is to have dominion over him. The current Hellenistic formula, "in

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—voluntary renunciation of what was dearest to them, for His sake (Matt. x. 39; xiii. 44), the bearing of shame and discomfort (Matt. v. 11; Luke xiv. 27), a fearless confession of Himself (Matt. x. 32; xii. 30). For His sake men were to be prepared for any sacrifice. He unhesitatingly applied to Himself the same moral maxims which were peculiar to God. He did indeed attach men to His person as no one had ever done before.

There is still one more respect in which belief in Jesus is set on an equality with belief in God. It is God Himself who awakens belief in Jesus—"in babes" (Matt. xi. 25) no less than in Peter (Matt. xvi. 17).

* * * *

There is another fact which shows clearly that Jesus claimed this belief in His own person, which is demanded also by God. Jesus never charged His disciples to broadcast His teaching, but rather to disseminate belief in Himself. Even James realizes this and in his Epistle he demands belief in the Lord of glory. The Eleven realized that they were His witnesses who were to lead the nation to confess Him—that is, they were to lead them to discipleship. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper, in constant practice since Pentecost, were to bind His followers closer to Himself. Even the enjoyment of daily bread was to refresh their memories, so anxious was He to awaken and preserve belief in His person among His people.

Luther says on one occasion, "Belief and God belong together," and who can deny this? But if this is so, then it is clear where the place of Jesus is: opposite to man and by the side of God. It is not true that He desires to be for us only the way leading to the heavenly Father. No, along with God, He is the goal. For this is where belief comes to rest.

* * * *

That everything depends on our attitude towards Jesus the name of," signified the property of a person, or the establishment of a relationship of possession.

is still more clearly apparent when He claims love from His followers. He praised Mary of Bethany simply because of her demonstration of love towards Himself, even though it looked as though the poor would suffer by her action (Matt. xxvi. 11 ff.). He felt the grateful love too in the behaviour of the woman who was a sinner, and held it up as an example (Luke vii. 44 ff.). Anyone who desires to hold office in His Church must love Him; and it is this love that can bring a man back to find mercy if he falls (John xxi. 15 ff.). Repentance means a return to Him, allowing love to Him to regain the upper hand. Prophets and founders of religion have been content that men should believe in their words. This Man demands that men should love Him.

This demand soon acquires extravagant proportions. For Jesus demands from His followers a love such as only God can claim: they are to love Him with heart, soul, and mind (Matt. xxii. 37). From each of His disciples Jesus claims what God had demanded from the sons of men in the old covenant, that they should not be distracted by father, mother, brother or son when engaged in the business of God (Deut. xxxiii. 9). He must be dearer to them than anyone else, even though their devotion may lead to a divided household (Matt. x. 37 f.). He, who considered the care of mother and father a bounden duty ordained by law (Mark vii. 10 ff.), demands that, if a decision must be made, a man shall hate both father and mother for His sake (Luke xiv. 26). Yes, He demands that we shall hate our own life; when love to ourselves and love to Him come into conflict, we must so definitely give Him the advantage that it looks as though we hated ourselves. But a man can bear this only for the sake of the highest good, that is, for the sake of God, and here again Jesus stands for us beside His Father.

There is a close connection between love to God and love to our neighbour. So far as Israel was concerned, there had never been considered anything false in loving

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one's neighbour merely on account of the image of God seen in Him. But here again Christ quite distinctly puts Himself in the place of God. The Christian is to see in his fellow-Christian Christ's property—yes, Christ Himself, and therefore he must love his neighbour. This thought finds constant expression in the apostolic epistles, but it goes back to Jesus Himself. He expects from us a love towards Himself so strong that it drives us to love His people. The exercise of mercy is to acquire its value from the fact that it is exercised for His sake.¹ Thus the love approved by Him which we show to others flows from our love to Him, exactly as in the old covenant it flowed from love to God. This is only possible if we have here one who does not hide God, but reveals Him. Only because He Himself represents the Father (John xiv. 9) may He claim what no other man could claim—the love which belongs to God, undivided and undiminished.

In speaking of the extravagance of His claims, there is another thing we must remember. Even during the time of separation the disciples were to live in constant remembrance of Him, and to feel their responsibility towards Him. Their minds were to be dominated by the watchful expectation of His Second Coming. To be prepared was everything (Matt. xxiv. 36–42, 50 f.; xxv. 13), and their preparedness depended on their loyalty in fulfilling the duties He laid upon them (Matt. xxiv. 45 ff.). "Keep My commandments." "As servants waiting for their Lord." "In fear and trembling" (Luke xii. 35 ff.). What a claim this was!

Luther has given us this rendering of the first commandment "We are to fear, love, and trust God above

¹ For that means "done unto one of the least of these My brethren" (Matt. xxv. 40; cf. x. 42; xviii. 5).

all things." The Jew, who always bore the words, "Hear, O Israel," graven on his phylacteries, laid strong emphasis on the word "only" in this commandment. Jesus does not only wish to lead us into the direct experience of being children of God (as we are so often urged to believe nowadays), but He demands a place for Himself in our piety. How true it is that "the original Christianity is not theology nor christology (doctrines of God and Christ), but theolatriy and christolatriy (worship of God and Christ)!" (Deissmann). Jesus did not ask that men should pray to Him,¹ but He awakened the desire to do so. He was not surprised that His work should lead men to show Him divine honour, it was His will, His deed, His aim. He had a purpose in applying love to God, belief in God and the fear of God, to His own person. In that way He directed prayer towards Himself, for it is through prayer that faith breathes.

Thus did a deeply pious Israelite, whose understanding was acute and whose thinking deliberate, set Himself clearly and unfalteringly on a level with God. We can but state the facts which lie before our eyes: here we recognize a stupendous, self-assured greatness, unaffected by doubt or hesitation, reflected for us in the extravagance of its claims.

¹ He could not do so. The disciples who had stopped their ears when He spoke of His approaching death could not assimilate directions as to their intercourse with the Risen Lord.

TRANSITION TO SECTION B
WHY WE CANNOT EXPECT ANY COMPELLING
MANIFESTATION

WHY WE CANNOT EXPECT ANY COMPELLING MANIFESTATION

FROM His own words about Himself we have been able to get several conclusive glimpses into the inner life of Jesus. It is important to note that what we have seen has not the transitoriness and uncertainty of self-made conceptions and ideas. Rather have we observed facts based on self-revelation which is absolutely convincing and as unparalleled as it is significant.

Let us recall some of these: the existence side by side of an acute moral discernment with an unshakable consciousness of His own faultlessness, even in thought; the combination of the greatest humility and the most profound piety with the conviction of a unique oneness, indeed equality with God; the calm but assured and conscious setting-up of divine claims, along with a sober, clear, and above all pious mode of thought; finally, the formation of a Messianic hope which, while apparently hopelessly unreasonable to human conception, has been proved in the course of centuries to be divinely audacious and divinely effective. In the actual and incontrovertible material which thus lies before us, we are faced with values which are far above all human standards, thus confirming their own divinity. This is no human spirit into which we have been penetrating. The facts which we have here before us, and which are easily verifiable, force us again and again to the conclusion that this is no specimen of the genus "man," but that He must be placed by the side of God.

If in the heart of this personality there is so much richness, it must give rise to the presumption and the expectation that in His external life also the inner qualities must be somehow reflected. If it is not to appear imperfect, the exalted inner life of Jesus must show itself in His outward life. We do not believe that a complete

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“incognito” can be taken into consideration, for God does not purposely mislead men who are so prone to error. Yet we must preface this part of our study with one remark. We may not count on any clear-as-day manifestation of the rank of His person. God is always reluctant to use violence. Our liberty is a slight thing which can only be preserved in the twilight. If God were to reveal the Son clearly and indisputably to the world by external means, the liberty, development, and faith of mankind would be shattered in pieces. That would be the end of “he that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still” (Rev. xxii. 11). For man would be forcibly conquered by the sunlight of clear understanding. Thus we must not expect to find in Him who was the Son any absolute and misleading incognito, nor yet any compelling revelation of His position and rank.

PART THREE

IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES
THE COURSE OF HISTORY CORRESPONDING
TO JESUS' SELF-ESTIMATE

(B1) HOW FAR THIS COURSE IS JESUS' OWN DOING

CHAPTER I

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

It is the shining impress of love which gives to Jesus' miracles the peculiar glory which they all bear. The Old Testament prophet used his miraculous powers in his own service without hesitation and as often as was necessary. "Make me a little cake first . . . and after make for thee and for thy son," said Elijah quite naturally to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 13). Jesus, on the contrary, never used His miraculous powers to make His own way through the world easier. This was the sacrifice which He offered first in the wilderness (Matt. iv. 2 f.). His enemies spoke very much to the point when they described His behaviour by saying, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save" (Matt. xxvii. 42).

Nor did Jesus ever employ His miraculous power to carry through His own will. Could He not have overcome opposition by using it to arouse fear and apprehension? Yet He never did so. It is against this background of ample power that His patience shines most brightly. He never used constraint, still less punishment, which was certainly the way taken by the prophets. All their work was actually enforced by miracles of chastening. But Jesus did not even make self-preservation—the universal excuse—a reason for His miracles (John vii. 10; viii. 59; xii. 37; cf. 2 Kings i. 9 ff.).

His great powers were employed only in the service of love. The fact that He so often forbade people to speak of the benefit they had received from Him shows clearly that He sought nothing for Himself. His love is most distinctly visible where it is obviously arrested by the greatest misery—in the house of sickness, with the man who had had an infirmity for thirty-eight years (John v. 6), or in the synagogue, with the woman who had

borne her cross for eighteen years (Luke xiii. 16). The thread of His love was woven strong and firm—the high priest's servant discovered in the night of betrayal that it had not even then given way (Luke xxii. 51). Thus the peculiar glory shining in Jesus' miracles is very different from that of the ancient men of God—it is an obvious reflection of the glory of the Father, who is Love. But Jesus Himself said, "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30)—and here we have the actual course of history corresponding to His own self-estimate.¹

And yet, though His miraculous deeds were all done in the service of love, it is not enough to describe the aim of this activity as being merely the removal of physical distress and want from His people. If this had been the real aim the miracles would certainly have been much more numerous. What was their intention? Was it the same as that of the prophets of old? Their miracles were intended to show forth the glory of the God of Israel (Exod. vii. 3, 5; xvi. 7; 2 Kings v. 15, 17); but to the prophets themselves they were a proof that God had sent them (Exod. iv. 1, 5, 8).² Without doubt Jesus had this end in view also. It was by means of His miraculous knowledge that He accredited Himself both to Peter (John i, 42) and to Nathanael (v. 47). He performed a miracle on the man sick of the palsy as a proof that His word could set him free from sin (Matt. ix. 6). It was, in fact, clear to Him that, as He said, "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish . . . bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me" (John v. 36). And

¹ If it had been imagination which, stirred by the stories of the prophets, had attributed the miracles to Jesus, how different the picture would have been! But now there is a great simplicity in them; they are exclusively—and if you will, monotonously—a service of love.

² Later among the apostles, in the same way (Acts xiv. 3; Heb. ii. 4).

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in this assurance He claimed that men should believe because of His miracles (Matt. xi. 4 ff.; John x. 38; xiv. 11),¹ lamenting aloud the incredible unbelief in the face of such mighty works (Matt. xi. 21 f.).² Developments such as those shown in John i. 49; ii. 11; iii. 2; vii. 31; ix. 32 ff.; Matt. xii. 23; xiv. 33 are on the lines which Jesus desired—miracles leading to belief.

Jesus was convinced that His miracles presented an ample and powerful guarantee of His mission—so ample, that any other sign would appear superfluous to those who knew how to interpret signs at all (Matt. xvi. 3 f.). So convincing were they that if the power of discernment were developed far enough, men should be able to realize that the Kingdom of the Messiah was already at hand (Matt. xi. 4 ff.; cf. John i. 51). He was convinced that His mighty works were so great that under their influence even the most arrogant Gentile cities, even Sodom and Gomorrah would have been awakened to repentance (Matt. xi. 20 ff.). He entirely agreed with the opinion of the people that nothing of the sort had ever been seen in Israel before, and that His deeds overshadowed all others (Matt. ix. 33; John ix. 32; xv. 24). According to His own words, they were a greater testimony to His mission than was the testimony of the Baptist (John v. 36). Belief in His works often seemed to Jesus to be the line to which He could retreat, as on to sure ground (John x. 37 f.; xiv. 11). Any opposition in the face of such performances could in Jesus' judgement be caused only by hardness of heart and by the will to disbelieve (John v. 40 [36]; cf. Matt. xxiii. 37).

It has become common to try to diminish the weight of this testimony of the miracles by saying, "For the people of those days it was all right, but we cannot see them for ourselves." Can we not see that we are taking no account of history, that great teacher, when we speak like this? Let us note, too, in this connection how Jesus

¹ So does the evangelist in John xx. 31.

² The evangelist also, John xii. 37 ff.

Himself unhesitatingly took for granted that the Baptist would bow in faith before the news of His miracles, though he himself had seen none of them (Matt. xi. 4). In the case of Thomas also, the facts were similar (John xx. 29).

But there are other words of Jesus with regard to His estimation of miracles as a means of awakening belief, which appear to express clearly an actual disparagement of miracle-working. Not only did He look with suspicion on faith based only on miracles (John ii. 23 f.), but He openly rebuked faith that lived on that alone (John iv. 48; xx. 29), and His actions entirely harmonized with His words. He refused to perform miracles in answer to the demands of His enemies (Matt. xii. 38; xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 8; Mark xv. 30), and never attempted, as the prophets did, to overcome rising opposition by increasing their number (John vi. 30). Such behaviour it seemed to Him would be superficial, and would bring no inner conviction. Besides, He knew too well that there is nothing a man clings to more obstinately than his unbelief. He who will not believe cannot be forced to do so by signs (Luke xvi. 31).

Thus Jesus had something greater in store by which to create faith. He was able to give men assurance about Himself. Those who knew Him could not forsake Him for they had tasted the words of life from Him, and His position as the Son was made clear to them in their intercourse with Him (John vi. 68). That being the case, the plane of miracles in the life of faith is quite clear—the effect they had was only the commencement of a process which was afterwards to continue independently. For Jesus, miracles were never the enduring pillars on which a building is based and which are to be considered necessary to its establishment.

And so the place of miracles in the life of Jesus again shows us the peculiar glory proper to this Man. The Old Testament prophets continually used miracles as a means

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of authentication, for their own imperfectness bore no impress of their divine message. For Jesus, on the contrary, miracles were only necessary as a primary means of arresting men's attention. The man who really sees Him¹ sees the Father, and from that moment he is vanquished, and needs no further miracles.² But here again we see the course of history following the words uttered by Jesus about Himself. "Christ is so great that individual miracles seem small in comparison." Yet there is ultimately no disparagement of the miracles in this, but only an exaltation of Jesus.

If what we have already said fully described the actual facts, it might be expected that Jesus' miracles would have come to an end the moment He had gathered together a large enough circle, whose members He could then quietly lead to a sufficient assurance of His person and His work—just as the scaffolding can be removed after a building is completed. But Jesus' miracles continued until the day when He was taken prisoner (Luke xxii. 51). Where else are we to look for their significance? They were inseparable from Jesus Himself; they were a part, in fact one of the principal parts, of His mission, a bit of His self-presentation without which it would have been incomplete. By means of them the glory within Him shone through. Light cannot be prevented from shining, and in the same way His glory had to become luminous, and did so in the miracles. They were something which could not be hindered from breaking through, and if they had been forcibly arrested, men would necessarily have been led astray.

¹ Certainly it was not enough to see Him only in part. That is why the miracles are still necessary in order to keep us close by this Man who is so often an "offence." Cf. Part I ("The Validity of the Gospel Picture").

² Jesus Himself excludes the Jonah-miracle from this, however. In the confusion caused by the offence of Good Friday, human weakness had need of it (Matt. xvi. 4-26).

The difference which exists here is a radical one. Jesus was not only sent from God, as other men had been. Rather did God's succouring and consecrating mercy appear in Him. He did not merely exclaim warmly, "May God help you!" "May God comfort you!" which is often the best we can do. He was so close to God that He was able to give this help and comfort Himself. Jesus was never content with mere words, for the time of aid and succour had really come with His advent. His miracles were like a sermon of deeds, the preaching that He was come to remedy all need. To Him they were a part of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Just because He was to establish this Kingdom, He was to make an attack on misery of all kinds. Where God's Kingdom is, all misery is at end, and wherever He brought salvation there was called into existence a commencement of the Kingdom of God. He no longer merely proclaimed the Kingdom, He brought it. The whole Kingdom of Heaven is in the first place a great gift from a bountiful God for the blessing of mankind. Because Jesus' actions bear so clearly the inscription, "He brings an end to all our misery," therefore they prove Him to be the Messiah promised by God to the world for this purpose (Matt. xi. 3 ff.; xii. 28; John v. 36; x. 25; xv. 24). But then all His miraculous deeds were ultimately nothing more than a presentation of Himself.

If we hold fast to the fact that salvation, created by the working of the Messiah, is to be found in the miracles, that in them Jesus is right in the midst of His Messianic work, there are two different points of view from which we must look at it. First of all, and principally, the miracles appear as the first-fruits and at the same time as the pledge of the Messianic age of salvation. In them we have individual examples of what will happen to all of us if we are obedient to Jesus—banishing misery utterly He will set up in its entirety the merciful dominion of God. But until then, His miracles signify at least the commencement of the "restoration" (Isa. xxxv. 5 ff.). In

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them, Jesus presents Himself to us as the mighty "Lord," bringing in the Kingdom. But in so doing He has in view the whole man, both body and soul, His plan comprising enduring healing and deep inward renewal.

If His miracles are first of all and principally first-fruits of the dawning Messianic day of salvation, they speak at the same time, with an eloquent and partly prophetic tongue, of what He will perform in the future. And this is to be even greater than what is already apparent. We are accustomed to Jesus speaking in parables, but we must familiarize ourselves with the idea that His miracles too, in part at least, and perhaps entirely, were parabolic deeds—deeds which were meant to show in an unforgettable way, which might often be comprehended only later, something greater that would take place in the region of the soul. There are two reasons why we need not suppose that in this Jesus was expecting too much of His public. First, the Orientals were accustomed to this constant interchange of the actual and the spiritual. If we think of the language of the prophets, we see at once how they very often forced the people to translate even their actions into terms of the spiritual (1 Kings xxii. 11; Isa. xx. 2 ff.). Secondly, Jesus Himself did much to help in transferring His miracles into the region of the spiritual life (Matt. viii. 22; xiii. 13; Luke xiv. 21; xv. 24; John ix. 5, 39). Thus He could confidently look on them as parables,¹ proclaiming to the people the great things He had in store for them. At the same time His miracles had this advantage over the spoken parables, that being mighty deeds, they bore in themselves the proof that He who performed them could really carry out what He foretold and promised.

Thus His miracles were symbolical representations of the great works which He had come to perform. The lame are made to walk: what does that signify? He gives the hearts of men power to follow His command, "Go and sin no more" (John v. 14). The blind have their

¹ This is why John always calls them signs (cf. Isa. xx. 3).

sight restored, and this signifies that He is able to enlighten the world (John ix. 39). The deaf hear, and He gives to men a sensitive ear for the voice of the Father. Lepers are made clean, and thus He effectively proclaims, "Thy sins are forgiven thee" (Matt. ix. 2; Luke vii. 48).

Jesus Himself demanded that men should understand the "sign" in His miracles, and should therefore seek after Him (John vi. 26). In the miracle of the feeding of the multitude, the Father puts His "seal" on the fact that here is one able to give men nourishment for the soul (John vi. 27). Wine makes the heart of man rejoice; Jesus is the bridegroom in whose presence there is no fasting (Mark ii. 19). He can say to the hearts of men, "I will refresh you" (Matt. xi. 28). What was the miracle of the wine in Cana but the solemn proclamation that here at last the Messiah had appeared with the gift of joy, and that the age joy was dawning?

Had not the singer of the Psalms spoken of "a sea of people"? Had he not put these two thoughts together—"Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves and the tumult of the people"? (Ps. lxxv. 7). Is it too much to suppose that, when Jesus rebuked the sea (Mark iv. 39), He meant to say emphatically to His disciples, "Fear not their violence," a counsel which they might remember later on and come to understand better? Were not His walking on the sea and the unexpected help He gave to His disciples when they were in danger in the ship (Matt. xiv. 25) meant to make them understand and believe when He said to them, "Let not your hearts be troubled" (John xiv. 1), "Behold, I am with you alway"? (Matt. xxviii. 20).

Jesus never uttered a curse against any man. But why did He curse the fig-tree, which could not be held responsible for its condition? (Matt. xxi. 19). Was it not a pledge that this Jesus *can* curse? (Matt. vii. 23; xxv. 41)—"Learn a parable of the fig-tree!"

Finally, the dead were raised. How that proclaims His life-giving force! He desires to give a dead world the power

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to live (John v. 25). But assuredly these miracles on dead persons foretell something more—here is He who has been called to perform the Messianic work, the future resurrection of the dead (John v. 28 f.).

All these miracles were performed, more or less, on individuals; but they are signs of the spiritual gifts which Jesus has in store for all mankind. He Himself emphasized the universal application of what He did when, standing by the grave of Lazarus, He said, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" (John xi. 26). And all His miracles are in the long run pronouncements about Himself. They are to explain Him, to expound Him in the richness of His person. The Son brings what men ask for from the Father—forgiveness of sin and deliverance from evil (Matt. vi. 12 f.). "For the Father loveth the Son and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth" (John v. 20).

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There was one particular field in which Jesus obviously loved best to perform His miracles, for the advent of His Messianic domination was here made more apparent than in any other region (Matt. xii. 28 f.; Luke x. 18 f.). We refer to His conflict with the kingdom of Satan, revealed as it was in the physical and mental depravity of humanity. There is no doubt that in those days the world was destitute in a very high degree of all the forces of salvation and life, and therefore given over to sin and its dark powers. But it was only in Israel that the people had been awakened to a consciousness of their state. The world had gradually been going downhill. First sin had been the servant of man, then man became the servant of sin (John viii. 34), being mentally and spiritually possessed. Finally this state affected the body too, and sin was responsible for great physical distress and endless misery. Here then were phenomena where sin and disease stood in the closest connection. People who, having once been cured, gave themselves up again to sin, paid the penalty immediately in disease (Matt. xii. 43 ff.).

These mysterious symptoms of a dual life can only be fully comprehended when we see how those unhappy people were really under the influence of a supernatural force, which hated the Holy One of Israel as much as it feared His power. These miserable people felt themselves drawn to Jesus, the Saviour, in the same degree as they feared His power of condemnation (Mark i. 24). It was in this field, where sin and misery appeared in closer union than anywhere else, that Jesus loved best to exercise His healing power.

It was here too, undeniably, that it made its greatest impression (Matt. ix. 33).¹ His opponents had to admit that supernatural power was here at work. They did so unwillingly, for they did not dare to put His performances on the same level as their own attempts at exorcism. What they did could be done by man, but His deeds pointed to supernatural power. Unreasonably enough they then declared this power to be satanic (Matt. xii. 24 f.). Jesus however was convinced that it was just these miracles which most clearly proclaimed the coming of God's Kingdom (v. 28); for here He obviously fought against the devil and his most fearful works. If they were destroyed it was proof that here was one stronger than the strong, who had first bound Satan and then spoiled his house (Matt. xii. 29). But where the dominion of the devil's power was shattered, there the rule of God was begun. It is true that here the earthly deeds of Jesus penetrate into the spirit-world which is held in check by Him, but here, more than at any other point, the kingly glory of His power shines through.²

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¹ Without any prolonged exhortation and laying on of hands such as the sufferers were accustomed to in their own exorcists (Matt. xii. 23). To His disciples also they seemed the mightiest of His miracles. Thus Mark (i. 39), as well as his guarantor (Acts x. 38), tells exclusively of them.

² It cannot be denied that there is something strange to us in all this. In Christianity to-day—at least for the most part—we are without any analogy to the people of those days who were

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All this shows how fundamentally different Jesus' miracles were from those of the prophets. To the prophet miracle-working was a gift of God, a strong proof that he was sent by God, but it was entirely supplementary to his work, being merely the guarantee of his message. To Jesus, on the contrary, miracles were an actual part of His Messianic work, something quite inseparable from Him as the Messiah. In the whole course of the history of revelation Jesus is the one and only person in whom the miracle and the Man are one. Miracles were a sort of occasional and alien addition to the prophet's personality. In Jesus they were the development and the manifestation of His personality. The fountain of divine love and divine power within Him had to find an outlet. But there is more in this than simply a difference of degree between Him and the prophets. This is clearly

possessed by demons. The reason is clear: moral defects give evil spirits a kind of legal right over men; but in Christianity we have forgiveness, and therefore this right lapses. In these circumstances the reports given us by missionaries are all the more significant. According to them, the Bataks of Sumatra, for instance, differentiate sharply between epileptics and those possessed by evil spirits; and the Batak Christians are firmly convinced that demonic power is real and actual. "It is certain that in the heathen world which is still untouched by the Gospel there are dark powers of evil at work, of which Christianity has now no knowledge, and the heathen are exposed to influences from the kingdom of darkness from which we seem as a rule to be immune." "We missionaries must try to do justice to such phenomena, all the more because we have in our congregations upright Christians who were formerly under such influence and can vouch for their reality from their own experience." "Batak Christians who were formerly mediums, occasionally relapse, against their will, into this state of possession. When they have 'become human again,' as they put it, they are deeply distressed about their backsliding, and insist that their actions have been ruled by a force which they could not understand. . . ." "It may well be that the opinion of these modern native Christians agrees with that of the members of the Early Church. Both have felt in their own bodies the power of the heathen religion; both have seen behind its spiritual powers satanic forces at work . . . to which were given the power of falsehood, corruption and leading men astray. The testimony of those who

seen in the reason and aim of His miracles, once given by Jesus Himself when He said they were performed "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John xi. 4). What prophet dared even to think of such a thing? Could any of the followers of the prophets ever have said of their master, "He manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him"? (John ii. 11). Jesus not only demanded that men should conclude from His works that He was sent from God, but going still further, that He was in the Father and the Father in Him (John x. 38; xiv. 11). What prophet again ever claimed such a thing of himself?

We can put the matter thus: this Man is a gift from God to mankind. The miracles were partly a means of distributing this gift, and partly they served as an interpretation, bestowing on it the seal of security. Thus for the first and only time in the history of religion, have come out of heathenism and know from experience how powerful it is, deserves to be listened to." The heathen understand that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8), because they have experienced it. To them Satan is a master, armed with might, out of whose despotism they have been delivered by Jesus. Now the demons have lost their power. The Batak magicians declared quite openly that since the "word of God" had come to the neighbourhood, their magic had failed, and that not only against the Christians. (Think of the similar complaint of the *pontifices* and *haruspices* during the Diocletian persecution, that in the presence of Christians no *auspicia* could be achieved.) While the mpepo-disease (the result of possession by a demon) is a common phenomenon among the heathen Shambala, it has for some unknown reason died out completely among the Christian natives. (Cases of possession are not confused with other forms of disease, just as in the Bible, where a sharp line is drawn between the man who was deaf and dumb in Mark vii. 32 and the dumb man with a devil in Luke xi. 14; and between the blind man in Mark viii. 22, and the man possessed of a devil who was blind in Matt. xii. 22.) Jesus frees the heathen from Satanic forces, delivering them from an iron yoke which is more painful and oppressive than we can well imagine. It is this action that makes Him appear to them in such overpowering greatness and glory (Warneck, *Die Lebenskräfte des Evangeliums*). Harnack, in an essay on the fight against the demons, says, "There are facts in this domain which cannot either be argued away or explained" (*Die Mission in den Ersten Drei Jahrhunderten*).

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miracles take on the character of a gift of salvation for mankind.

But if that is so, there can have been nothing fortuitous about them, in every instance they bear the aspect of the dawning Kingdom of God. They cannot be fittingly called merely a sign from heaven (Matt. xvi. 1). They cannot be forced into any given pattern. His miracles are Himself—no isolated *miracula*, but an enduring stream of blessing from the throne of God. Not once are they a glorification of the Man, but always a proclamation of the Gospel in deeds. It is hardly possible to imagine a stronger proof of the credibility of the narrative in our possession. This Man and His miracles are of a pattern. Here it is a fact that the external glory is so at one with the internal glory that it makes the latter visible. That which was within Him became apparent (John ii. 11; ix. 5; xi. 4, 40). But it becomes more than ever clear to us that here we have the course of history corresponding with Jesus' self-estimate. Without this, even with His own assurance, we might be confused; but having it, along with His assurance, the two together may well provide a firm foundation of the Christian belief (John xx. 30).

* * * * *

In connection with the above (from p. 405 onwards) we must emphasize another point: we refer to the high degree in which Jesus' miracles were peculiar to Himself. For we believe that if we study the individual miracles and the way in which Jesus performed them, we are forced to the conclusion that He gave them a substantiality otherwise unknown in the history of revelation.

We would note first the immediate, royal assurance which Jesus manifested in every case. He knew at once what He had to do. To the disciples' expostulation, "This is a desert place, and the time is now past," He answered unhesitatingly, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat" (Matt. xiv. 15 f.).¹ Hardly had He received the

¹ John vi. 5 ff. shows the same immediate determination.

sisters' message before He knew, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God" (John xi. 3 f.). Even after emphasizing the fact that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel, He had only to perceive the great faith of the Canaanite woman, and at once He was ready to help her (Matt. xv. 28). His disciples asked Him what sin the blind man had committed, and even as they put the question He knew what He was to do (John ix. 3). The father of the demoniac boy had hardly finished his complaint about the helplessness of the disciples when Jesus said, "Bring him to Me" (Mark ix. 19). And to the widow of Nain whom He saw weeping He said at once, "Weep not" (Luke vii. 13)—words significant because they were prophetic. In no instance can we see any trace of dependence in His determination. How long the prophets used to wait for the word of Jehovah! Jesus never needed to wait in silence and solitude for a sign from His Father before proceeding with His miracles. It is mere wilfulness to read anything of the sort into His words at the wedding, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John ii. 4), for He was speaking here of His hour, not of God's hour. It is a fact that His miracles all had the same tone—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John xxi. 22). It is the completely free will of one who is the Son.

Still another consideration agrees with this conclusion. Jesus did not entreat each of His miracles from God by prayer. We often find the prophets entreating God before performing their miracles (1 Kings xvii. 20 ff.; 2 Kings iv. 33 ff.). James holds up Elias as an example in a case of this sort (James v. 16 f.). We hear too of the apostles that they engaged fervently in prayer before performing their miracles, and it is very informative from this point of view to compare for instance Acts ix. 40 with Mark v. 41. Jesus proceeded with His miracles without praying for power to perform them, and it is entirely misleading to describe His behaviour as that of "a man of prayer, calling upon God." In the same way Martha

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did not do Him justice, in spite of her lofty words of belief (John xi. 22).

How consciously He refrained from prayer before His miracles is made particularly clear in two instances. Since the days when, in the wilderness, Jesus once and for all rejected all self-glorification in refusing to create bread for His own need, He followed the human custom of giving thanks for food. But when, as was His habit, He was in the act of giving thanks in prayer for the bread, He did not add any petition for the miracle He was about to perform (Mark vi. 41; John vi. 11). The other incident is when He emphasized the need for prayer, especially in difficult cases, as when His disciples were unable to cure the demoniac boy (Mark ix. 28 f.). When His disciples were astonished at the fig-tree withering up, He again made the incident an occasion for teaching them that prayer was for them the source of such deeds (Mark xi. 22 ff.). But in neither of these cases did He give His disciples an example by praying Himself.

Yet there is one incident which seems to contradict our statement. It is said that Jesus sent up a prayer to God before healing the man who was deaf and dumb—"Looking up to heaven He sighed" (Mark vii. 34)—both these gestures showed that He prayed. Is this really the case? This "sighing" of Jesus can be explained in various ways. Perhaps it was a sigh of despondency, as in Mark viii. 12.¹ Is it too far-fetched to suppose that the Man who took the barren fig-tree as a symbol of Jerusalem, followed the same train of thought here, the deaf and dumb man symbolizing the people whose "ears were dull of hearing"? (Acts xxviii. 27).² Or this "sighing" may have been on the same lines as the tears by the grave of Lazarus. Looking at the afflicted man,

¹ The fact that these two miracles are recounted so close together is also significant. What could be more probable than that the expression would be used in the same sense in both places?

² Luke x. 21 shows us the opposite of this "sighing." There He "rejoices in spirit" because He found a "hearing."

Jesus may have been seized with pity for the misery of the world. In any case, we cannot assume with any certainty that the "sighing" signified prayer for power before the performance of the miracle. Besides, it hardly seems probable that, if He really had to obtain the miracle by prayer, He would have gone about it so superficially as was the case here. The fact that He looked up to heaven means nothing more than that He was very fully conscious of His communion with the Father, and clearly manifested it before men. This was made doubly necessary in the case of the deaf and dumb man, as it was the only means of making him understand.

There is still one other incident which is said to establish definitely the fact that Jesus had to obtain His miracles from God by prayer. At the grave of Lazarus He Himself said openly, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me," and further, using a general phrase, "I knew that Thou hearest Me always" (John xi. 41, 42). Thus the Son entreats and the Father hears—that is clearly the mode of procedure in Jesus' miracles. It seems to us that this assumption is over-hasty. Days before, Jesus had stated His intention of going to "awaken Lazarus" (vv. 11, 14), and as soon as He received the sisters' message He unhesitatingly determined to do so (v. 4). But if I announce on one day that it is my intention to act in a certain way, I do not pray and entreat about it days afterwards, even if I know that my prayer will be answered. The significance of the prayer must be sought elsewhere. Anyhow, it is a prayer of thanksgiving rather than a petition. Jesus thankfully acknowledged how matters stood—He in the Father and the Father in Him, all that is the Father's is His also. According to His own words, He set forth the matter in this way "because of the people which stand by" (v. 42, cf. xii. 30). Otherwise it would not have been clear to them—had they not already accused Him of receiving help from Satan? (Matt. ix. 34; xii. 24). Therefore this declaration of the matter was very

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important. In fact, on one occasion Jesus spoke of it as one of His most pressing concerns (John xvii. 7). For Christian perception was ultimately to find its aim and end in the knowledge that He was sent from God (John xvii. 3). He was therefore deeply concerned that His works, rightly interpreted, should help towards this end (John xi. 42); and in His audible conversation with His Father at the grave of Lazarus, He fulfilled the interpretation of the action which was to Him of such importance.

* * * * *

Let us continue these observations which show us how independent Jesus was in His miracles. The prophet of the old covenant performed his miracles in the name of God. "Thus saith Jehovah," was the solemn formula with which he commonly announced them (1 Kings xiii. 21; xvii. 14; 2 Kings i. 16; iv. 43; cf. Isa. vii. 11). Later on His disciples called on Jesus instead of God in their miracle-working (Acts iii. 6). Jesus Himself never once took the name of God on His lips when performing His miracles. Was He not more deeply religious than them all? Why did He not give God the honour, if it was He who bestowed the miracle-working power upon Him? Was it not a fitting moment to point the Canaanite woman to the God of Israel? It might have influenced her whole life. Why did He utter no word of God to this Gentile woman, leaving her with her faith in the "Son of David"? (Matt. xv. 22).

The fact that He never mentioned the name of God in His miracles becomes still more significant when we note that Jesus put Himself in the foreground on these occasions. Later, the disciples anxiously tried to prevent men's eyes from dwelling on them as the real miracle-workers, rebuking the people, "Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?" (Acts iii. 12). Cyprian Vignes, the peasant of the Cevennes, cried in the same way to those

who gazed at him in astonishment because of his deeds, "I am nothing, I am less than nothing, a poor, frail creature. Go to my God, He is a living God, there you will find all you need." But this Man, who was assuredly not lacking in piety and humility, unhesitatingly and constantly laid the emphasis on Himself in His miracles—"I will" (Matt. viii. 3)—"I say unto thee" (Luke v. 24; vii. 14)—"I command thee" (Mark ix. 25)—"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" (Mark x. 51)—"Behold, the Son of man hath power" (Luke v. 24). It was He who "rebuked" the sea (Matt. viii. 26), just as God had once "rebuked" the Red Sea (Ps. cvi. 9; Nahum i. 4). Thus He did nothing to turn men's eyes to God, but everything to fix them on Himself.

Let us look for a moment at the simple yet majestic way in which He performed His miracles. What a to-do the ancient prophets used to make. We need only read the story of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 21 ff.), or of Elisha and the Shunammite (2 Kings iv. 33 f.). What a business it was to waken the child! Or think of all the trouble Elijah took about the rain! (1 Kings xviii. 42 ff.). Prayers and imprecations and all sorts of ceremonies followed each other in rapid succession. With Jesus we find nothing but a simple word of command, spoken in full assurance (Matt. viii. 3; Mark i. 25; iii. 5; Luke vii. 14; viii. 54; xvii. 14; xviii. 42). It happens just as He says, what He commands is accomplished. Such a method gives the impression that the power He made use of was His own. This Man could put forces into motion which are unknown to us and which were at His disposal as they are at the disposal of God. Here is no plenipotentary, but one with independent power.

This impression is strengthened when we notice how Jesus was altogether content that requests should be made to Him, faith should be in Him, and gratitude, too, should be offered to Him. Only in a few isolated cases do we find any attempt to lead the grateful recipient to give

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thanks to God (Mark v. 19). But He actually demanded faith in Himself (Matt. ix. 28), or tried to strengthen this faith (John iv. 50). Indeed He warmly commended the centurion for his faith in His person, when he was the first to acknowledge—certainly in somewhat soldierly fashion—that Jesus had a sort of unlimited power of command over heavenly spirits and forces. Nor did He feel any modification to be necessary, such as that the Son of man would not have this power if it were not given Him from above (cf. John xix. 11). Such considerations lead us of necessity to the realization that Jesus' miracles were independent actions of His own. It is true we must once again note that it was only because this Man was entirely one with God that God was never concealed by His actions.¹

There is still one circumstance of which we ought to take note if we are fully to appreciate Jesus' independence in His miracles. The power in question was so much His own that He was able to hand it on. He gave the disciples the conviction that their power to work miracles came from Him (Acts iii. 6; ix. 34; Mark xvi. 20).² He distinctly and repeatedly said that He had given them power over evil spirits (Mark vi. 7) and against disease (Matt. x. 8). Because Satan, fallen from heaven, had been cast at His feet, Jesus knew that He was able to give His disciples authority over demons (Luke x. 18 f.) and He consciously clothed the authority which He gave them over everything harmful in the words (v. 19) used in the ninety-first Psalm of the power given to God's servants (Ps. xci. 13). Yet He never urged them to call upon God in their miracle-working. It was enough for them to trust in His command, and to act in conjunction with Him (Luke x. 17). Such was His independence that He could be a source of power for others (John xiv. 12 f.)

¹ Cf. John x. 28 f., where we see the use of the same expression, *His* hand and the Father's hand, and the reason for this in v. 30.

² This conviction is apparent even before the resurrection (Luke ix. 54; x. 17).

even after He has left them. Then how extensive the glory of His power must have been!

In conclusion, we can understand how any man, who has sought for help and found it, should be filled with devotion to the miracle-worker and express his belief in his unlimited power. But it would be the duty of the hearer to correct such exuberance and point the petitioner higher. Jesus not only failed to do this, but He intentionally took the foremost place. This sincerest of men acted indeed in a way which would have been far from honest if He had had to call on God for power to perform His miracles. We can only describe His miracle-working by saying that He did not receive the miraculous, but performed it. Just as He was not only instrumental in providing the bread ("Give us this bread," John vi. 34), but declared that He Himself and all that is in Him and goes forth from Him preserves life ("I am the bread of life"), so He is not only instrumental in providing God's aid, but is Himself God's help incarnate, giving out of Himself.

Here again we have only found what we were justified in expecting: the course of history exactly corresponding to Jesus' self-estimate. "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father" (Matt. xi. 27)—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18)—"The Son of man hath power to heal and to forgive sins" (Matt. ix. 5 f.)—"All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine" (John xvii. 10; xvi. 15)—"I and the Father are one" (John x. 30)—these words and others like them (John i. 51; iii. 35; xvii. 2) manifest the strongest possible consciousness of self, and are reflected in the events which took place. Here there is apparent a peculiar power unified with God, and this self-glorying of Jesus is not removed by expressions such as "the works which My Father hath given Me" (John v. 36), for He uses the same term of His words too (John xvii. 8-14, 24). In both cases the phrase only means that

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both were the result of the most intimate communion with God.¹ The Father who is within Him speaks through His words (John iii. 34; xii. 49), and the Father who is within Him performs His works through Him (John xiv. 10). Therefore, in the long run, they are God's words and God's deeds in Him and through Him. Nothing is said or done of Himself (John v. 19; xii. 49)—yet again everything is of Himself (v. 17, "I say unto you"—"I will that . . ."). He and the Father are one in a marvellous way. He Himself spoke of this unity² and He both spoke and acted in accordance with it. Yet this connection never interfered with the independence of both His words and works. Rather, in spite of being thus bound up with the Father, His behaviour always showed the peculiar, free bearing of one who was the Son (John v. 19, 30; [i. 14]; Heb. iii. 6).

Our contention may quite justly be opposed for two different reasons. First, the miracles of healing were not always performed in the simple way we have described, merely by means of a powerful and effective word. And secondly, what He was able to do often seemed to depend in a high degree on the faith of men. It will be our business to show how this apparently obvious limitation of Jesus' power is in fact merely apparent.

With reference to the way in which Jesus performed His miracles, we admit that we reject from the outset

¹ In His disputes with the Pharisees He laid particular emphasis on this, so that His opponents might conclude from His works that the Father was in Him and He in the Father (John x. 38; xiv. 11). They could only do so if the works had been given Him from the Father; cf. also with the expression "given" (John v. 26, in the same speech). It is clear that this "given" is only the popular word for the Son's existence being grounded in the existence of the Father.

² Also in the phrases "through the spirit of God" (Matt. xii. 28), "with the finger of God" (Luke xi. 20). The expressions used of Him, "the Spirit remaining on Him" (John i. 33), "the power of the Lord was with Him" (Luke v. 17), denote the same thing.

such representations as seek to show that sometimes the miracles were carried out laboriously and painfully. Mark viii. 24 f. and ix. 25 f. are quoted in this connection. But there is no struggle or tremendous effort here, only a process, a development, an evolution. At the same time we must acknowledge that Jesus very often laid His hands on those He was going to heal (so often that the people actually begged Him to lay His hands on them (Mark vi. 5; Luke iv. 40—Mark v. 23; vii. 32; viii. 22; [Matt. ix. 18]); and that He went still further, in touching in all sorts of ways the persons of those seeking to be cured. Attempts have been made to conclude from this that some peculiar healing power emanated from His body—as is often to be found in other people.¹ A solitary phrase in the Gospels (Luke vi. 19),² which speaks of virtue going out of Him and that therefore the whole multitude sought to touch Him, is taken to bear out this opinion. It is well to note that it is Luke the Physician who employs the strongest phrase tending to bring this out, and he was obviously trying to explain the incident in this way. Yet another circumstance is still more significant; in the cure effected on the woman with an issue of blood who touched His garment, all three evangelists are unanimous in ascribing the cure not to this touch, but to the woman's faith.³ It is therefore hardly pertinent to draw extensive deductions from this solitary phrase. But there are other facts which prove to us that it would actually be mistaken to do so. If Jesus' touch had been of decisive value in the cures He effected, He would have had to make use of it in every case. But not only did He constantly perform miracles of healing on people at a distance who, one presumes, had never felt the touch of

¹ "A vigour of His physical organism, which enabled Him to transfer by touch the vital forces which were in Him."

² Cf. Mark v. 30, and particularly the parallel in Luke viii. 46, where Jesus Himself declares that virtue had gone out of Him.

³ In Matthew it appears as though Jesus' word alone gave the believing woman the healing she sought.

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His healing hand (Matt. viii. 13; Mark vii. 29; Luke xvii. 12; John iv. 50), but we should note that, in driving out evil spirits, He never made use of the laying on of hands, or of anything approaching that.

Besides, any wonderful curative force emanating from His person would not explain all the other miracles which were not miracles of healing at all.

If Jesus' touching of the sick folk had no importance in bringing about the success of His miracles, what did it signify? In many cases it had no significance at all, but was only the natural gesture of the miracle-worker. When Uhde painted Jesus as the Comforter, he naturally portrayed Him laying His hands on someone. Otherwise it would have looked unnatural, and Jesus was never that. He called to Lazarus from the mouth of the grave; He touched the bier of the young man; He took the little maid lying on her pallet by the hand (similarly Mark ix. 27). All these were completely natural gestures. He could not touch those possessed with devils who behaved like wild creatures, but He took the little children in His arms (Mark x. 16). His hand could not reach the sick man in the large circle the people made round Him, so He reached him with His word (Luke vi. 10); but it was natural that He should lay His hand on the bent back of the woman who had an infirmity, as it straightened under His touch (Luke xiii. 13). He took Peter's bed-ridden mother-in-law by the hand and helped her up (Mark i. 31); He touched the bleeding ear of Malchus (Luke xxii. 51)—for would not any other procedure have seemed stiff and formal, out of harmony with the vivid, fresh nature of Jesus?

Yet it is true that His touch often did signify something. It gave expression to His warm love. Jesus never saw men in the mass; and so, even when the multitude crowded round Him He laid His hand in love on each one He healed (Luke iv. 40). It would have seemed to Him harsh not to let those who stood near Him feel the clasp of His hand (Luke xiii. 13). He must have known

how it would gladden the heart of the leper, shunned by everyone, to feel Jesus touch him, as though he were already clean (Matt. viii. 3). The blind man by the wayside was a beggar. He cannot have looked very attractive, with his festering eyes clogged with the dust of the road. Many people made a detour to avoid the dirty old man who sat there, bent and miserable, and that was just why Jesus called to him so kindly and laid His hands upon him (Mark x. 46 ff.). It is easily seen that it was just with those people who had not the use of all their faculties, to whom therefore His personality could not make its full appeal—the deaf and the blind—that Jesus made use in the greatest measure of His touch (Matt. ix. 29; xx. 34; Mark vii. 32 ff.; viii. 23 ff.; John ix. 6 ff.). Quite obviously He meant to compensate them as well as He could for their misfortune in not seeing His kindly eyes or hearing His friendly words. In those days a deaf-and-dumb man was a burden, heartlessly pushed hither and thither. How he mistrusted people in consequence! On the highway too, in the scorching sun, they had pushed him towards Jesus without his knowing what was expected of him. What an impression it must have made on him when, for the first time in his life, he felt a gentle, experienced hand touching his, and saw compassionate eyes turned towards him! There can be no doubt that, in so far as Jesus' touch had an aim, it was only to let those in need of love feel the warmth of it.

And now, finally, was not Jesus' power dependent on the faith of men?¹ Is it not the case that confession of belief in Him was a mighty and even a determining factor in His miracles? This can be observed in many instances. Faith does perform miracles. If a sick man

¹ We must remember that this, too, refers only to the miracles of healing.

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has only abundant confidence in a doctor, there are scarcely any limits to the success that can be achieved with his case. Do not many statements in the Gospels themselves give us cause to suppose that in His healing miracles the same strong influence may have been at work? When people believed in Him He could perform mighty deeds. And when they did not, as, for instance, in Nazareth, His power was of no avail (Mark vi. 5). Let us examine this more closely.

If the cures effected by Jesus were nothing more than the involuntary consequence of His spiritual operation, how can we explain the fact that the majority of the miracles were performed at the beginning of His ministry, just at the time when His spiritual efficacy had not yet become apparent? Or how can we explain the other fact, that Jesus Himself complained that in the cities where His greatest miracles had been performed the spiritual effects were lacking? (Matt. xi. 20 ff.). Such a bond, therefore, between successful healing and spiritual efficacy cannot have been in operation.

But there is a still more important fact to be set against the assertion that the success of the miracles of healing was dependent on the belief of the patient. Not a few of the cures were accomplished without any belief on the part of the sick man or woman. The woman with an infirmity did not entreat Him for help. Jesus compassionately called her to Him of His own accord (Luke xiii. 12). The lame man at the Pool of Bethesda did not know who Jesus was—not even after he had been cured (John v. 13). And if it is supposed that Jesus desired to awaken belief by His question (John v. 6), the answer was so half-hearted (v. 7) that one can hardly call it awakened faith. Did Malchus exhibit any belief? (Luke xxii. 51). Or the man by the wayside who was born blind? (John ix. 1). Or any of those possessed by devils? Even in the incidents when faith did play a great rôle—the centurion at Capernaum (Matt. viii. 5 ff.), and the Canaanite woman (Matt. xv. 22)—was it those who

were actually healed who showed their belief? "His servant was healed in the selfsame hour" (Matt. viii. 13). It happened without any communication between the miracle-worker and the sick man, or any spiritual influence from one to the other.

The question remains, what other significance for Jesus had the faith of those who sought healing? For it is quite certain that it was of importance to Him. One need only read Mark ix. 20 ff., where the father of the demoniac boy is so carefully shown the way to belief. It can perhaps be said that the merit of the recipient depended on his faith.¹ It is not as though Jesus never made an exception to this rule. He could not follow it in the days when His miracles were performed in order to awaken belief. But even later, His compassion often led Him to give help even when no belief had been expressed. Yet, in those later days, faith determined as a rule the merit of the recipient. The miracle was the believer's reward (Matt. viii. 10, 13; ix. 28 f.; xv. 28; Mark v. 36). Even then Jesus never degraded His miracles to a means of forcing belief, rather did He deny Himself to unbelief.²

In this regard also He was the true image of His Father. "Let a man ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (James i. 6 f.—Matt. xxi. 22).

In conclusion, we may say that we can find here no limitation or curtailment of the power which is apparent in Jesus' miracles. On the contrary, even after close study, we recognize the course of history following His own self-estimation. Here, in fact, glory is revealed

¹ In Mark ix. 23 Jesus sensitively resents the man's words "if Thou canst."

² It is from this point of view that we should understand Mark vi. 5 f. "He could not" means that their unworthiness made it impossible for Him (cf. Matt. xiii. 58).

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such as the Father gives only to the only-begotten Son, into whom He can pour His own glory, unalloyed (John i. 14).

There is, however, still one other point where we can observe this glory.

CHAPTER II

THE SEARCHER OF HEARTS AND THE PROPHET

THE twelve-year-old Child sat in the Temple asking questions (Luke ii. 46). It is a sign of gifted children that they ask many questions; but in Jesus' case such questioning is at the same time a conclusive proof that He did not know everything.

Did perhaps the baptism in the Jordan (Matt. iii. 16) transform this nescience into knowledge? But Jesus continued asking questions. "How many loaves have ye?" He asked in the desert (Mark viii. 5). "How long is it ago since this came unto him?" He asked the father of the sick boy at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark ix. 21). "Where have ye laid him?" He said to the sisters at Bethany (John xi. 34).¹ It is indeed indubitable that many of Jesus' questions were simply a means of beginning a conversation. He asked the blind man whom He had called to Him, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" (Luke xviii. 41); the disciples at Emmaus, "What manner of communications are these that ye have one with another as ye walk?" (Luke xxiv. 17); those who had come to arrest Him, "Whom seek ye?" (John xviii. 4); and the Magdalene, "Why weepest thou?" (John xx. 15). That He did not wish to find out anything by His questions in these instances is most clearly seen in Mark ix. 33; for here He received no answer from the embarrassed disciples, and then showed them immediately that He knew what they had been talking about and that they were now ashamed of it. One may be tempted to suppose that, as in this case, all Jesus' questions were simply a means of giving the conversation a particular bent. Yet such a supposition

¹ Other questions, Mark viii. 23, 27; ix. 16.

would be doing violence to the facts. Even those who stood closest to Him presumed that He did not know everything. The sisters at Bethany sent Him news of the illness of their brother (John xi. 3). Thus the impression received even by those who knew Him and His nature most intimately must have been that He was not omniscient.¹ And Jesus never regarded such an attitude as derogatory to Himself. Rather on such matters where a man can ask for information from others He inquired sincerely—that is, with the desire for information.

But there is another thought that clearly runs parallel to the one we have just considered; and it ends in the declaration, "Lord, Thou knowest all things" (John xxi. 17), and in the disciples' conviction, "Now we are sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee" (John xvi. 30).² Or again, "Jesus needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man" (John ii. 25). What was it that had awakened this conviction in the hearts of the disciples?

Jesus, watching Philip leading the hesitating Nathanael to Him, had only to look once at the man, and immediately He judged him to be "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John i. 47), an honest doubter, ready to accept the teaching of one who knew better. It was on the day before this that Andrew had brought his brother Simon to Jesus; and on that occasion, too, one glance had sufficed, and Jesus had told Peter straight out, "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone" (John i. 42). This was the man easily swayed by every opinion, in our eyes the most inconsistent nature among all the disciples, the possi-

¹ The fig-tree misled Him, covered as it was with foliage out of season.

² That is, You do not need that men should ask. You know the questions which they would like answered.

bilities of whose development were so incalculable, and who was one day to be torn hither and thither by the most contradictory emotions. Yet on His first meeting with Peter, Jesus recognized the rock-like nature of the man on whom the Church was afterwards to be founded (Matt. xvi. 18; Acts ii. 14). Only one who knew the hearts of men as no other has ever done could have foreseen this development.

A young man crossed His path whom Jesus had never seen before. One short conversation, then a deep glance into the young man's eyes, and Jesus had read enough of his soul to feel more than ordinary affection for him (Mark x. 21). The Pharisee thought that Jesus did not know about the woman who was a notorious sinner in the town (Luke vii. 39); but Jesus showed him at once that He knew this woman much better than the Pharisee did—it was not only a great sinner who knelt before Him but one who had turned in repentance from her sin and found the mercy of God (v. 47).

How sharply Jesus forbade the disciples to make even a hesitating attempt to connect sin with disease in the man who was born blind! (John ix. 3). Yet He Himself recognized with one confident glance that in the man sick of a palsy the inner need was really greater than the physical suffering (Matt. ix. 2). For this cripple was conscious ("Be of good cheer") that he had brought his illness on himself—possibly by sexual licentiousness. The lame man at the Pool of Bethesda had not perhaps realized that he was suffering physically for the same kind of sin, but Jesus revealed it to him with His warning, "Beware of the old life of sin, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John v. 14).

He knew what His disciples had been disputing about on the way, even though they were too ashamed to tell Him (Mark ix. 33). He knew, too, at once what was in the hearts of His opponents (Mark ii. 8; Matt. xii. 25), just as He recognized at once (i.e. "from the beginning," John vi. 64) the change in the heart of Judas and the

beginning of his first treacherous thoughts.¹ In the very first apparently harmless encounter with the Pharisees' party He saw at once the whole development of their hostility (John ii. 19). He could, in fact, read character as other men read books. Those who have won a name for understanding human nature are able to judge a man's nature by his acts; but Jesus could do more: He saw the thoughts of men which led to their actions.

It was because of such experiences that the disciple who stood closest to Him could say, "He knew what was in man" (John ii. 25). But it is just in his Gospel that we find in two places this further witness to Jesus, "Thou knowest all things" (John xvi. 30; xxi. 17). What was it that led him to this greater confession?

It was not only the state of men's hearts that Jesus understood. He was aware also of purely external incidents and events. Before Peter opened his mouth to tell Him so, Jesus knew that the disciple had been asked for the Temple tax, and forestalled his question with one of His own (Matt. xvii. 25). He knew what Thomas had truculently demanded, and shamed him by repeating his very words (John xx. 27). He knew that the illness of Lazarus had proved fatal, and that it was time to go up to Bethany (John xi. 6, 11, 14). He even knew where the fish in the Lake were to be found in abundance, and sent Peter to the spot (John xxi. 6; Luke v. 4; cf. Matt. xvii. 27). In the crowd a woman touched His garment with a trembling finger. Was He not being touched on all sides by a dozen people at once? Yet He knew that something special had occurred, and would not rest until He had found the woman (Mark v. 30 f.). But that is not all. His wonderful knowledge was not limited to the present but extended to the past. The lives of men utterly strange to Him lay spread out before His eyes. He saw Nathanael where no man could have seen him—

¹ This cannot have been easy, for even at the Last Supper the disciples could still ask, "Is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 22), and when Judas left the table they had no idea that he was a traitor.

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in the arbour made by the thick foliage of the fig-tree (John i. 48 f.). He probably knew that at that moment Nathanael had been praying ardently in secret for the coming of the Messiah; and this wonderful discovery of his secret quickly forced to Nathanael's lips the confession that Jesus was the Messiah. It was His miraculous revelation of her previous life, "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband," which made the Samaritan woman all at once realize that the Man who stood before her was, in fact, what He professed to be—the Messiah (John iv. 29; cf. vv. 18, 26). Without doubt it must have been these and similar experiences which led the disciples to the conviction, "Thou knowest all things." But how does that agree with the certainty of the sisters at Bethany that they must send news to Him of their brother's illness, and with the fact that He asked questions of His disciples?

* * * * *

It is not difficult to realize that His miraculous knowledge, of which we have been studying examples, moved within a prescribed orbit. It served the purposes of His calling. The steady eyes of Jesus penetrated the nature of the man who stood before Him, in order to find the right word, the right way in which he might be won or rendered innocuous. And when in doing so He displayed a miraculous knowledge of purely external matters, it was always in the service of these moral purposes: with Nathanael (John i. 50), with the woman of Samaria (John iv. 39), with the fishermen on the Lake of Genesareth (Luke v. 10). All these incidents show Him striving to bind the people to Himself for ever. And in the case of Judas, early recognized and unmasked as a devil (John vi. 70), we see the ardent desire to preserve the faith of the eleven from being shaken later on. It is not as though He saw all the hearts of men laid bare before Him, or that all outward circumstances were revealed to Him. No, it was only when His eyes were

fixed on some special objective when He wanted to read a human heart (John i. 42, "Jesus beheld him") that both hearts and objects lay exposed and open before Him. Then, indeed, if He willed it so, He saw a man's past and future too. Thus the statements in the Gospels do not justify us in speaking of His omniscience any more than of His omnipotence. Both His knowledge and His labours found their limits in His calling; but within these limits He did indeed possess divine omniscience as well as divine omnipotence. Here all things were given Him of the Father (Matt. xi. 27), and that explains why His followers, who knew Him so intimately, could confidently make these two assertions about Him—that He asked them for information as other men did, and that yet He knew all things and needed not that any should testify of man (John ii. 25; xvi. 30; xxi. 17).

Thus, here again He is removed from all comparison with men. It is true that the prophets also show isolated and rare moments of clear vision. But it was a permanent attribute of Jesus to see more than men do. If we want to find anything similar we must think of Him to whom the psalmist prayed, "The righteous God who trieth the hearts and reins" (Ps. vii. 9), who says of Himself in the prophets, "I the Lord search the heart" (Jer. xvii. 10), and whom therefore the apostle designates as the Searcher of hearts (Acts xv. 8). "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off . . . and art acquainted with all my ways" (Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3—"with all my ways," John iv. 17)—only here can we find any parallel to Jesus' dealings with men in this respect.

But once again we find here nothing more or less than the course of history corresponding with His own self-estimate. Jesus placed Himself beside Jehovah (Ps. xxiii.) as the Good Shepherd (John x. 11). His people were aware from of old that the Lord knew whom He had chosen (Num. xvi. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 19). But it was His will also that they should realize that the great Shepherd of the sheep (Heb. xiii. 20) knows His own (John x. 14)—

their capacities, their strength, their need. It is because He knows them that He is able to warn and to admonish them in time, and to pray for them (Luke xxii. 32). His position as shepherd is thus based on His miraculous knowledge; without it He would have been taking too much on Himself in saying, "I am the good shepherd." As it is, even this aspect of His incomparable self-estimate is confirmed by the course of history.

It was not His divine omniscience that first awakened the disciples' belief in His divine origin.¹ Yet the faith which was already there may well have found in it, rightly and joyfully, a new, strong ground for assurance.

* * * * *

In close association with His miraculous knowledge is His prophecy—similar and yet of a different nature. We have already noted in another part of this book how Jesus' prophecy was the servant of His love. Here it is to be our endeavour to discover further glory in His predictions.

There is one point in which Jesus' prophecy is differentiated at the outset from that of the prophets. The subject of it was always and exclusively Jesus Himself (Matt. xxi. 37; xxiii. 31 f.; xxvi. 2, 12; Mark viii. 31)², men's relationship to Him (Matt. xvi. 18; xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 30; John vi. 70), and the fulfilment of their destiny in Him (Matt. viii. 11; x. 17 ff.; xxiv. 2; Mark xii. 9; Luke xix. 27, 41 ff.; xxiii. 28 ff.; xxiv. 49; John xvi. 2 ff.; xxi. 18, 22 [xiii. 36]). He spoke only of what He will do, how He will treat His own. When did any prophet dare to make himself the subject—and, in fact, the only subject—of his prophecy? But Jesus realized His

¹ Any more than the Samaritan woman's belief in Him as the Messiah (John iv. 19). (Rather v. 26.)

² Christian Eschatology (doctrine of the last things) is essentially Christology (declaration of Christ's person and work). The last things, i.e. Christ Himself, the returning, judging, fulfilling Lord (Matt. xxv. 1 ff., 31 ff.; Luke xxi. 27).

greatness and knew that after His death history would find its most significant purport in Him. Thus it is self-evident that when He spoke of the great crises of history He had to speak of Himself. For history ultimately revolves round Him. He is to be preached to the ends of the earth, and the destiny of all nations will be fulfilled in Him (Luke xx. 18).

Not only is He Himself the object of His prophecy, but its aim is to be found in Him. By means of it His person is to be established. He told His disciples what would happen before the events took place, so that afterwards they should believe in Him (John xiv. 29). To assure His position as Messiah He produced the proof of prophecy (John xiii. 19). Here again any comparison with the prophets is out of the question. What prophet's utterance ever had as its object the emphasizing of his own person? He wished to make it clear that Jehovah is God. Unexpected events were not to shake this belief but to establish it. Jehovah established His own position by foretelling the future through His prophets. Jesus took the place of God. Through His prophecy¹ faith in Him was to reach assurance.

It is particularly in Deutero-Isaiah that prophecy is used as a guarantee of God. Those who laid claim to divinity are called upon to compete with Jehovah on the basis of proof by prophecy. "Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods" (Isa. xli. 23 f.). But the idols cannot do it. "There is no God else beside Me" (Isa. xlv. 21). Only Jehovah can "show us former things . . . that ye may know and believe Me and understand that I am He" (Isa. xliii. 9 f.; cf. also xlii. 9; xlv. 7 f.; xlv. 9 f.; xlviii. 5). The reader who knows how much Jesus lived in this second book of Isaiah, will be doubly sure that He laid emphasis on the assurance of His person by means of prophecy as God did

¹ Just as with the prophets prophecy was the work of God, so it is Jesus' work, manifesting itself as such even in its form. He never used the formula, "Thus saith Jehovah."

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in Isaiah, and that His words, "that ye may believe that I am He" (John xiii. 19) are nothing but an echo of Isa. xliii. 10. He, like His Father, gave His people assurance by prophecy—"I am He, and there is none other beside Me." It is the fate of mankind to feel their way in darkness. But He who has power to see the future has provided proof of His divinity.¹

* * * * *

That prophecy should really have the power to prove the authenticity of the prophet, two things are necessary. First, it must be actual prediction, and not merely the threat of something which may be averted by repentance, or warning of possible danger. Jerusalem will absolutely be destroyed (Luke xix. 41; xxi. 6; xxiii. 28); Judas will of a certainty be a traitor (John vi. 70; Matt. xxvi. 21, 24); Peter will inevitably deny Jesus (John xiii. 38; [Luke xxii. 32]). The fact that we are unable to reconcile our idea of human liberty with such sure and certain prediction is unimportant. God's foreknowledge and our liberty always stand in this state of contradiction. But it is only when prophecy is certain and assured that it provides proof of divinity.

The other point is that its fulfilment must follow the prophecy quickly enough for its correctness to permit of demonstration.² Peter's threefold denial before the cock crew (John xviii. 27; [xiii. 38]), Judas' betrayal, Christ's death—actually by crucifixion—(Matt. xxvi. 2; John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32)—and during the Passover—(Matt. xxvi. 2, 12, 18; John xii. 1, 7), His resurrection and ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, which was to be in Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 49), the fate of the disciples (John xvi. 2; xxi. 18, 21), the acceptance of the

¹ And so this power of prediction is attributed to the Holy Spirit as an important work.

² Such control is spoken of in Isa. xli. 22, "Let them show the former things what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them."

Gentiles, actually in the place of Israel (Matt. viii. 11 f.) the destruction of the Temple—all these things, which were for the most part quickly demonstrated, served as proof of His assertion, "I am He."

* * * * *

The power of proof in prophecy is naturally dependent to a high degree on the unexpected in what is foretold, and the incalculableness of the prediction. There is nothing in all Jewish Messianic teaching of the death and resurrection of the Messiah. "Thou art the King of Israel"—such words show that the dreams of even the most upright of His followers took a very different path. And now, in sharp contradiction, He set up the announcement of His betrayal and death. Another point: if He were to die, might it not be like the Baptist, in the darkness of the dungeon, by the hand of the assassin? Or might it not have been confidently expected that He would fall a victim to a crowd of rioters, as Stephen did later on? (Acts vii. 57). How often He had been threatened by just such a crowd (Luke iv. 29; John viii. 59; x. 31). And was not death by stoning ordained by the law of Moses for those who blasphemed? (Lev. xxiv. 16; [Acts vi. 11]). From the early days of His ministry (John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32; Matt. xvi. 24, [21]; xx. 18 f.; xxvi. 2), He set the unexpected against the expected, with full assurance. His death was to be in Jerusalem, after formal legal proceedings and a long period of suffering; He was to be given into the hands of the Gentiles and they would crucify Him. Another point: it might have been expected that in order to avoid any uproar among the people, the high priests would carry out their intention—"Not on the feast day" (Matt. xxvi. 5). But in direct contradiction to this Jesus daringly foretold that He would be crucified during the feast (v. 2; John xii. 1, 7).¹

He had told His disciples (perhaps in connection with

¹ And the reason? 1 Cor. v. 7, cf. John xix. 36 with the Old Testament passage.

Hos. vi. 2?) that God would "raise up the Messiah on the third day." The phrase cannot have been clear, otherwise they would not have been so bewildered by the empty grave. They probably thought that God would deliver His anointed Son from death, as He had once delivered Hezekiah (Isa. xxxviii. 5 ff.), and their dreams of ruling, and sitting on thrones by His side would start all over again (Matt. xx. 21). In incredible contradiction to all this He foretold that He would set up His Kingdom from heaven (John vii. 34; viii. 21; xiii. 33, 36; "from a far country," Mark xiii. 34; Matt. xxi. 33; xxv. 14 f.; cf. also v. 5, "the long tarrying"; xxiv. 48), and that it should be the fate of His followers to be "as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things" (1 Cor. iv. 13).

The destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem, the utter rejection of God's people who were to be replaced by the Gentiles, even isolated incidents such as the flight of all His disciples on the night of the betrayal (Matt. xxvi. 31), the denial by the disciple who had been most ready with his confession, the treachery of one of those who had sat at table with Him—all these bore the stamp of the utterly unexpected and incalculable; and when they actually came to pass, the power of the proof by prophecy was enhanced in a high degree.

* * * *

What does this successful prophecy prove to us about Jesus? He *knew*. He knew all that concerned Himself and all that concerned His followers and the world, so far as it had to do with Him. But if He knew what was to happen and offered no resistance to it, then it must have been His will that things should turn out as they did. Much that happened to Jesus, and many events in history also, are dumb. Facts do not speak. They have first to be interpreted by man. By His prophecy Jesus lent a tongue to many incidents: they were all inevitable. The destruction of the Temple, the fall of Jerusalem, the entrance of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God

all speak loudly of God's intended anger as well as of His love. But above all, prophecy gave the death of Jesus a vibrating, resonant tone. Here there was no defeat or frustration; no, "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 18). Thus through prophecy, the death of Jesus is exalted into something over which man is not only to mourn and tremble, but which he must above all comprehend.

He knew His fate, yet He offered no resistance; and therefore He must have willed it so. But there is still more than this: He did much to bring it about. The prophet Jeremiah broke a potter's vessel (Jer. xix. 1, 2, 10) as a symbolic proclamation of what Jehovah had put into his mouth to say: "Even so will I break this people and this city" (v. 11). Jesus cursed the fig-tree, and it withered to its very roots (Mark xi. 14, 20). As He stood there, proclaiming in plain, thrilling words the fate of the murderous city, He was not only a prophet, He had it in His power to effect the city's doom Himself—as He had destroyed the barren fig-tree in one short night. Thus we have an ascending curve—He knew it, He willed it, He carried it out. Proof by prophecy involved all this for Jesus: He is the mighty Lord of history; along with His Father He is the maker of history (Matt. xxvi. 64; cf. also John xxi. 22).

But thus again we have Jesus' self-estimate corresponding with the course of history.¹

¹ In the foregoing we have set forth how Jesus' prophecy had in view the emphasis and confirmation of His person. Earlier in the book we noted the fact that His prophecy stood in the service of His love. These two assertions do not contradict each other, for there was nothing of self-seeking in His self-demonstration, any more than when God manifested Himself through the words of Isaiah. In both cases those who acted in this way were not doing so for their own sakes. The demonstration was needful for those before whose eyes it took place, that they should not be offended (John xvi. 1, 4), but should trustfully cling to Him from whom to be separated is death. That which might have been a cause for doubt is suddenly transformed by prophecy into a reason for belief (John xiii. 19; xiv. 29, He has said it).

PART THREE

**IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES
THE COURSE OF HISTORY CORRESPONDING
TO JESUS' SELF-ESTIMATE**

**(B₂) HOW FAR THIS IS A MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S
WORKING IN JESUS**

CHAPTER I

THE DAYS BEFORE EASTER

JESUS does not force belief, but neither does He purposely lead it astray. His course moves between these two extremes. The divine heart of His nature was not manifested so clearly and distinctly that unbelief became impossible. On the contrary, so much of His inner glory shone through that men were not forced of necessity to be offended because of Him. We have just observed both these points in His miracles of omnipotence and omniscience.

But all Jesus' business was His Father's business also. He too moves within the compass of these two extremes, never forcing men to believe or to disbelieve. God did not clothe the story of His Son with such radiance and splendour that any contradiction is out of the question, yet He let so much glory shine through that contradiction is not a necessity.

We should like, in what follows, to explain more fully what we have in mind. We are concerned here entirely with the operation of the Father. For there were facts, circumstances, and situations which were for the most part clearly beyond the influence of Jesus Himself. God brought them about in order to make the outward course of history correspond at least in some points with the inward circumstances. This is a process for which John minted the descriptive expression, "Him [Jesus] hath the Father sealed" (John vi. 27).

One of the things to which we would draw attention, is the name of Jesus. Its most probable interpretation will always be help, liberation—Jehovah is help, liberation (Matt. i. 21). But among all the names of Israel we could find none more suitable.¹ According to the Bible,

¹ The Septuagint more than once renders the Hebrew *jeschua* as "Saviour" (Soter) (Ps. lxii. 2, 7; Isa. xii. 2).

it was through the direct operation of God that this name was given to the Saviour of the world (Matt. i. 21; Luke i. 31; ii. 21).

But God's interposition in the course of history is far more significant in another respect—in the kind of gift He bestowed on the world: a Man who could be a Saviour because He Himself stood in no need of redemption. Sin has always been one of the things which the race of mankind hands on inexorably as a sorrowful legacy from one generation to another. Was Jesus to break this chain of inherited sin? It becomes evident that such a man would have to come direct from the hand of God, in the same way as the first man, Adam, whom God judged to be "very good" (Gen. i. 31; Rom. v. 14). Thus Jesus was begotten not through God's co-operation but by His exclusive operation (Matt. i. 18; Luke i. 35). He is the gift by which God's mercy is bestowed on us, His advent could not be dependent on the "will of a man" (John i. 13). If it was recognized later that He had brought His sonship from heaven with Him (John vi. 38; viii. 42; xvi. 28; xvii. 8 ff.; cf. Matt. xxii. 43), and that He, as the only sinless one, stood in sharp contrast to a world sinful in all its members, this makes His miraculous birth no more than the course of history corresponding with His own consciousness of self. Mary was betrothed to Joseph so that the miracle of God should not be noised abroad (Matt. i. 18-20).

Further, it is indubitably the case that certain quite definite expectations with regard to the Messiah had been awakened by prophecy. If mankind were not to be led astray, God, the mighty God of history, must fulfil these prophecies. That is why He so ordered events that Jesus really did come of David's race, as prophecy had foretold. Even His enemies never questioned this (Matt. ix. 27; xii. 23; xv. 22; xx. 30; xxi. 9; set forth as without doubt in Rom. i. 3). As Mary was betrothed to a husband of the house of David, according to the laws of His people her Son belonged to David's race

(Luke iii. 23). But on His mother's side also He was probably descended from the royal house.

It was God's doing also that Jesus was born in the ancient Davidic town of Bethlehem, thus again following the prophecy (Mic. v. 2). It was by a wonderful dispensation of God that at the time of the Child's birth Mary should be in Bethlehem—even the Roman emperor, Augustus, had to co-operate in this (Luke ii. 1), for it would have been much more probable that He should have been born in Nazareth (Luke ii. 6), the town in which He grew up (Matt. ii. 23; Luke ii. 51).

Another point in which God's overruling power becomes very clearly visible is in the fact that before Jesus' advent He provided the forerunner required by prophecy (Mal. iv. 5 f.). The two went their separate ways, independent of each other. When John started his preaching he knew nothing of Jesus.¹ But in order that Jesus should be made manifest unto Israel, John created the preliminary condition necessary to His advent by his baptism by water—as he himself told his disciples (John i. 31). Even after they had met each other, their paths lay wide apart. But their natures, too, were so different that the forerunner halted at the very gate of the Kingdom of God (Matt. xi. 11).² Again, the Baptist was so taken up with Him that should come, so sure that he was destined to be His herald, that he confidently designated himself, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" (John i. 23). And his was no chance voice such as had been heard more than once in an age excited by expectations of the Messiah; for this man

¹ "I knew Him not."

² Even though there seemed to be some resemblance in their preaching (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17), the inward meaning is quite different. The one cried threateningly, "Change your way of life, that the approaching Kingdom shall not be to you as a consuming fire" (Matt. iii. 7, 10-12), while the other proclaimed glad tidings, "The Lord in His mercy sends you His Kingdom; show yourselves worthy of it and return to your God." Or, still more personally, "Come unto Me, and I will refresh you."

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was flesh of His flesh, he was in every way in the descent of revelation, even though bound by Old Testament limitations, bearing all the marks of a genuine prophet. That Jesus thus found His Elias (Matt. xvii. 10 ff.; Mal. iv. 5) is one of the most marvellous dispensations of history, in which the finger of the God who moulds history is clearly visible. Here once more we have the course of history corresponding with Jesus' consciousness of Himself—this time as the Messiah.

* * * * *

In still another way God interposed in the course of history. By His marvellous providence a link was forged between the old and the new, in the nature of example and fulfilment—often to the end that the new should be interpreted by the old. The high priests did not wish Jesus' death to interfere with the Feast of the Passover—"Not on the feast" (Matt. xxvi. 5) were their express words. Yet God made this death take place just at the Passover time, during the twenty-four hours when the Passover lamb was slaughtered, so that the new should be interpreted by the old (Exod. xii. 21-24, 40-42; 1 Cor. v. 7). When the Passover lamb was sacrificed for the first time, God's act of redemption took place in Israel, and thus they became of the people of God; for this sacrifice of the Passover lamb was the fundamental act in the making of the covenant. Now again in the days of the Passover God re-enacted the scene, the sacrifice becoming the fundamental act in establishing the new covenant (Matt. xxvi. 28). This Passover Day was to put the song of praise afresh on the lips of the renewed Israel, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously" (Exod. xv. 1).

Let me mention another incident in which, by the dispensation of God, the old was linked to the new in a wonderful way. The limbs of the two thieves were broken with iron clubs, but He who hung between them remained untouched (John xix. 32 f.). For He was the

Passover lamb, no bone of His was to be broken (Exod. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12). Thus God manifested His greatness in little things, letting the thoughtful mind divine His overruling power, yes, and discover His meaning. The soldiers cast lots for Jesus' coat (John xix. 24), and pierced His side with a lance (v. 34), for both these things had been declared by the pious crossbearer of the old covenant (Ps. xxii. 18; Zech. xii. 10). One who sat at table with Him betrayed Him; His place was among evil-doers; the Gentile district saw His most glorious works—in every case there is a marvellous dispensation and overruling of God, so that the new—as willed by God—should divine in the sacred prophecies of old its own prototype (John xiii. 21, cf. Ps. xli. 9; John xix. 18, cf. Isa. liii. 12; Matt. iv. 13, cf. Isa. viii. 23; ix. 1). But if Jesus recognized that He was the aim and object of God's dealings, even this overruling and moulding carried out by God is nothing but the course of history corresponding with Jesus' consciousness of self.

* * * * *

When Paul was waiting in Corinth for his two companions, meaning to return home with them—for his divine mission was only to Macedonia (Acts xvi. 9)—the great success of his preaching, coupled with the schism in the synagogue (Acts xviii. 8), convinced him that there was a wide field for his labours in Corinth; but he had no divine confirmation of this conviction. Only when an outward experience confirmed his inward conviction did he feel quite sure about it, with the result that he remained for eighteen months in the city (vv. 9, 11). Jesus' consciousness of being the Son remained unshaken in the most difficult hours of His life. There is no doubt that His inward assurance was not dependent, as in Paul's case, on outward proof. Yet in three of the important hours of His life—at His baptism and twice before His Passion (Matt. iii. 16 f.; xvii. 5; John xii. 28)—we see that the Father gave His strengthening con-

firmation to this Son who had yielded Himself to His will. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5). On the third occasion Jesus Himself declared that God's voice was intended not for Him but for those who stood round about (John xii. 30). It is questionable whether He meant by this that the voice was not directed in any way towards Himself. In His capacity as shepherd of souls He desired to make His hearers think, and to realize their own condition. Perhaps one might say that it was not intended for Him in the same degree as it was meant for the crowd. For it is certain that God had chiefly these others in view on the other occasions—during the baptism, when He desired to give John assurance (John i. 33), on the Mount of Transfiguration, to give to the three chosen disciples a guarantee of the Second Coming (Mark viii. 38, coupled with ix. 2; 2 Peter i. 16), and shortly before the Passion, to give those who were ready to receive it the proof that the hand of God was at work even in Christ's suffering (John xii. 28).¹ Yet, in Jesus' life also, the "inward" and "outward" experiences confirmed each other, and in the hours of decision His consciousness of being the Son was not without a concrete response from the Father (cf. also Luke xxii. 43)—again showing how the course of history followed His consciousness of self.

* * * * *

We may mention two further incidents in the life of Jesus in which God's intervention is clearly to be seen—no doubt in order that the most important events in the world of the spirit should not be without their counterpart in the material world. The first of these is the wonderful phenomenon in the heavens during the days of Jesus' birth. The latest astronomical calculations with regard to the second chapter of Matthew show that in the year in question there was an extremely rare

¹ God's voice was interpreted in different ways according to the receptivity of those who heard it.

conjunction between the planet Saturn and the royal planet Jupiter. We can scarcely imagine the splendour of this conjunction of planets, which must have formed the Star of the royal Redeemer (Matt. ii. 2). And then the incredible happened: this conjunction, which as a rule takes place only once in the course of many centuries, recurred three times in this particular year.¹

A similar intervention of God in the course of nature took place in the hour when the Saviour's earthly life came to a close, when the earth trembled and the sun became dark (Matt. xxvii. 45, 51). Thus to the greater events in the world of the spirit were added counterparts in nature, confirmatory and complementary.

We are aware of the doubts sometimes cast on these reports. The testimony for them is not abundant nor conclusive enough. But they recommend themselves by their chasteness, simplicity, and naturalness, and they seem to us to be a postulate. We should have to search for them if we had not got them here.² For it seems to us unthinkable that God should have allowed these great events in the spiritual world to leave no trace on the material world. God is no one-sided idealist, external as well as internal things belong to Him.

¹ The first (v. 2) from March 30th to 31st, the last (v. 9) on December 5th.

² In this connection, think of the whole wonderful Christmas story as told by Luke. Ludwig Richter, in *Notes from His Diary*, tells of a sermon heard in Leipzig on the story of Christmas, and adopts our own train of thought when he says, "The wonderful phenomena of that night were the background for the greatest wonder of all, the Christ-Child, and so they do not seem miraculous, but only natural."

CHAPTER II

FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST

THE real high lights in the story of Jesus' life come after Good Friday. It is in the days following His death that the course of history is seen to follow His own self-estimate most perfectly. On the third day His grave was found empty. That was the plain fact accepted by the primitive Church. His dead body had disappeared and was not seen again. Instead, the risen Lord appeared to men, and those who saw Him were without the faintest doubt as to the reality of their experience. This was not the case to begin with. The disciples were all startled and surprised by what happened at Easter, overcome by the sudden and unexpected events. Some of His followers stubbornly opposed them (John xx. 25), refusing to believe that such things were possible (Luke xxiv. 37). But their unbelief was finally conquered by overwhelming deeds and words, and was replaced by a triumphant certainty. In those days He who had risen from the dead worked the most amazing transformations. Jesus' brothers, now completely won over, discarded their unbelief (Acts i. 14; John vii. 5), James soon becoming a pillar of the Church (Gal. ii. 9; Acts xii. 17); and the eleven apostles, whose hearts up till then had been dismayed and broken, dared to remove the seat of the congregation from Galilee to Jerusalem, in spite of the fact that they had been deprived of their leader. But it was something almost incredibly great that they had experienced. They struggle to describe to us in words what was really indescribable and unthinkable. Sometimes the Figure seems spectral, sometimes entirely material. Doubtless it was a vision they had seen; yet it was no dream-figure, but tangible and alive, and it had spoken to them. They could have sworn that it was a man of flesh and blood

FROM EASTER TO PENTECOST

if His sudden disappearance again had not taught them otherwise. Paul, too, saw the figure of Jesus as distinctly and positively as the other objects round about him (1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8). The assurance that they could have touched Him (Luke xxiv. 39; John xx. 27; 1 John i. 1) proved to the disciples that it was really He. But it was that which made His appearance such a unique event. We cannot exaggerate the deep impression Jesus' resurrection made. From the beginning it became the real creed of His Church, and in this creed lay the Church's power. What was the chief message these people proclaimed to the world? Was it not the resurrection of Him who had been crucified and buried? (1 Cor. xv. 3). It appears almost monotonously in all the speeches in the Acts. His Church felt this to be its greatest glory—"declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. i. 4). It was at Easter that they felt most deeply "Him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27). Here at last the course of history perfectly and fully followed Jesus' self-estimate.

* * * * *

Let us try to appreciate in more detail the fact of Easter. If the resurrection had not taken place, who would have had the last word, Jesus or His enemies? The world would have judged the latter to have been right. But that would have made the further operations of the still living Christ impossible. If the ruling conviction had been that Jesus had been justly crucified, how could He have continued working? Thus the resurrection is nothing less than the divine vindication of His honour—God acknowledging Him before all the world (Acts v. 30). Historical facts confirmed the self-estimate of Him who had always known Himself to be the sinless One, the only-beloved Son (Luke xx. 13).

His resurrection proved something more. It made clear Jesus' position as the Lord of the world. Is He the Messiah or not? That is to say, is Jesus He in whom

THE COURSE OF HISTORY

God's Covenant with the world is finally concluded? His resurrection gave the irrefutable answer to this most important of all questions. Now we know that the position Jesus claimed for Himself with God and in the world is legitimate. All the amazing things He laid claim to, both with regard to the redemption of sin and the judgement of it, found ample justification in His resurrection.¹ From this aspect also Easter shows the course of history corresponding with His self-estimate.

We have to be very practical in our consideration of Jesus. It never satisfied Him merely to introduce new ideals into the world. What He meant to do was to create new realities. His miracles of healing did not bring men beautiful promises and gracious comfort, but the great reality of most efficacious aid. And so in His resurrection victory over death is offered to those who "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 15). It is like a rock of granite on which the most fearful may feel secure.

In his great speech on Mars Hill, Paul estimated the resurrection of Jesus to be the greatest incentive to faith given by God (Acts xvii. 31). It is indeed the "sign" which God has given to an unbelieving world (John ii. 18 f.), the ground for cognition and conviction offered to all. But we can go further and say that it was by the resurrection that God shed ample light on the life of Jesus and on many of His words. Until the resurrection Jesus Himself was not complete. Only in it is He fully revealed (John xvii. 5). The disciples knew well that their proclamation went beyond what their Master had told them while He was still on earth (John xvi. 12). But they felt their greater testimony to be justified because they had experienced the tremendous and overpowering fact of intercourse with the risen Lord. They had seen Him not only as a figure of light, but had heard Him speaking to them. Are we wrong in believing that this

¹ With regard to the judgement, cf. Acts xvii. 31; the forgiveness of sins, v. 31.

intercourse between the risen Lord and His disciples was the source of their new and greater knowledge, and in supposing that it was here that they first received instruction as to His ultimate intentions?¹ At any rate Easter first gave them the key to His self-estimate, and made many things clear, reminding them afresh of much He had said to them.² Now they saw Him as they should have seen Him earlier, if their eyes had not been holden.³

To Jesus Himself there was nothing astounding about the resurrection. He never regarded it as anything peculiar, for it seemed to Him always the self-evident conclusion of His life. And could we imagine any other conclusion? "It was not possible that He should be holden of death" (Acts ii. 24). That is why we are sure of the resurrection of Jesus, why it is so credible. It is nothing more than the course of history corresponding not only with the self-estimate but with the inward nature of Jesus.

* * * * *

His ascension is most closely connected with His resurrection. Where is the risen Lord now? The only possible answer is that He is in God, uniquely in God. He was received up into heaven (Mark xvi. 19; Luke ix. 51; Acts i. 9; John vi. 62; xx. 17; 1 Pet. iii. 22; Eph. iv. 10; Heb. iv. 14). The inner, higher nature in Him had to live itself out. If the ascension had not taken place it would have seemed to us imperfect. But now His self-estimate has received the divine seal—"All power is given unto Me"—"Behold I am with you all the days." With His ascension He took up His position as ruler and was thus able to redeem His promises. The hope of His Second Coming also found its guarantee here (Acts i. 11). Thus the ascension too is a part of the great Amen with

¹ E.g. the command to baptize, or for Paul his mission to the Gentiles.

² Cf. the direct testimony in John ii. 22; xii. 16.

³ In his Gospel John describes Him with these new eyes, while the synoptic Gospels see Him often with the old.

which the Father confirmed His Son's utterances about Himself.

* * * * *

But we must consider still another event of far-reaching importance, the fact of Pentecost. We must not minimize in any way what took place then. The receiving of the Holy Spirit does not denote simply a frame of mind such as Jesus had, a being in harmony with Him. It is not enough to say that these people thought, acted, and spoke in the spirit of Jesus. The coming of the Holy Spirit was something quite definite, an event of which a man was so conscious that he knew clearly whether he had received it or not (Acts viii. 15 ff.; x. 44 ff.; xv. 8; xix. 2-6). A man might ask his neighbour, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?" (Acts xix. 2). It was an experience that people could take part in together (v. 6). To the disciples the Holy Ghost was something so actual that they made a distinction between the time before and after it had come (John vii. 39). It was not a fresh enthusiasm, but something very much greater, a new spiritualization. A new knowledge of salvation, a joyfulness of belief, a power of love was bestowed on them such as they had never experienced hitherto, and which no man could impart to himself. We can indeed influence ourselves (as our motives only excite but do not force us to action, we can choose which motives we should follow), but we cannot spiritualize ourselves. Fresh spiritual impulses must be given to us, and then they pervade us with their vitality. The Early Church was quite convinced that it had received such a gift from the holy and merciful God. Besides, we can see for ourselves that such was the case. These disciples, who before were groping uncertainly, now taught with the greatest assurance. The promise, "In that day ye shall ask Me nothing," was obviously fulfilled for them (John xvi. 23). If Easter had given them new courage, Pentecost engendered in them a holy discretion, a calm and collected spirit. And

to this spiritual experience of the community of the disciples there was added the particular gifts of the Spirit which became the shining ornament of the Early Church (Acts xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 8 ff.).

Thus in the consciousness of the Church Pentecost took its place directly beside Easter as the second great experience. Here, for the second time since Good Friday, the course of history perfectly matched Jesus' self-estimate: the gift of the Holy Spirit following swiftly on the Messianic age. Once again before all the world God had put His seal upon Jesus.

But here our observations take a fresh turn: this act of God becomes the act of Jesus. The same thing is to be seen in the resurrection and the ascension. The Son was not only raised from the dead by the power of the Father, He had power of Himself to take His life again (John x. 18). And the Son was not only taken up into heaven, but ascended Himself to the Father (John vi. 62; xx. 17). It is a proof of the marvellous oneness of the Father and the Son that we can look at it in either way. But at Pentecost the second aspect becomes predominant: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the gift of the Son (John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xx. 22).¹ The appearance of the risen Lord, and now above all the gift of the Holy Ghost exactly as it had been promised, were the acts of a ruler, exalted at the right hand of God (Acts ii. 33; v. 31 f.; the Holy Ghost as "witness" of the Exalted One). For He must have promised the Holy Ghost. It is not possible that He only spoke of the future bestowal of the Spirit in Matt. x. 20. How, in that case, could the disciples have at once recognized at Pentecost the gift of the Master? (Acts ii. 33). John must surely be right when he makes the basic tone of Matt. x. 19 f.—the sermon of "comfort"—ring through all the words of fare-

¹ In Acts i. 5, 8 (cf. Luke xii. 12) it is also taken for granted that it was He who gave the Holy Ghost. Thus, "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. viii. 9); "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son" (Gal. iv. 6); "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 19).

well. His followers felt that Easter and Pentecost had made Him indeed their Lord (Acts ii. 36). Unequivocally they had experienced His heavenly, dominating power as the crowning conclusion of His life on earth.

After the experiences of Easter and Pentecost His disciples worshipped Him as the exalted Lord (cf. page 333). Indeed, they saw in the outpouring of the Spirit His coming again (John xiv. 18, 21, 23, 28). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9). All that operates in us by means of Him may also be called the Holy Spirit. The revivifying of our souls is not brought about by God through Christ but by Christ direct, by means of His divine power. In its experience of the Spirit His Church came into lasting subjection to the risen Christ.

In those days the circle became wonderfully complete to the eyes of the disciples. He on whose divine origin they had so often conjectured during His earthly life had now been solemnly attested in this respect by Easter and Pentecost. Once again it was true that "Him hath the Father sealed."¹

¹ The destruction of Jerusalem also belongs to this sealing by the Father. The Jews received the divine answer to their rejection of the Son and to their sacrilegious words on Good Friday (Matt. xxvii. 25). They themselves were now rejected and beheld the blood of their children. And Jesus' words about His coming with clouds of heaven were here more clearly fulfilled than hitherto.

Yet it has all come about in the most marvellous way. For this downcast race still remains preserved, so that in spite of itself it should be a witness through the centuries to the dominating power of the Exalted One, at the same time waiting for the new dawn which He has shown them from afar (Matt. xxiii. 39, cf. Rom. xi. 26.)

And so modern Israel and its destiny makes the words again echo² in our ears—"Him hath the Father sealed."

CONCLUSION

THE act of seeing clearly is the fundamental act of learning which alone engenders knowledge; and this is what we have been occupied in doing. We have been concerned to put ourselves under the compulsion of "that which we have seen with our eyes," allowing it to make its effect on us. We have been guided by the conviction that "seeing" is enough, even if we do not at once "comprehend"—yes, even if we can never wholly comprehend. How often the same thing happens to us in the natural world also!

This procedure has justified itself. The faithful observation which we have so carefully practised has given us a picture of Jesus which bears in itself the freshness of the most definite and marked individuality, accompanied by an inexhaustible fulness of the finest personal characteristics.

It is true that the Jewish Apocalypse also proffers a character-portrait of the Messiah, furnishing it with uncommonly high qualities. "He hath a measure of the power of God" (Psalms of Solomon) no doubt means that all the attributes of God have been bestowed on Him; He is a God in little. It calls Him innocent of sin, full of righteousness, wisdom, power; "His words are purer than the finest gold; they are like the words of the saints in the midst of consecrated nations," that is, like the words of angels in the midst of nations of angels. The source of His power is the fear of God—"He is strong in the fear of God." But what do all such general phrases and sayings signify compared to the individual characteristics which we have been observing? We have found a complete likeness, sharply defined, uniform, vivid, and with the stamp of reality on its brow. The closer we have got to this Jesus the more He has shown us new aspects and depths of His nature. The mighty figures

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which can do this are no heroes of romance, but are rooted firmly in the ground of reality. Missionaries to the heathen are constantly experiencing afresh how rich this personality of Jesus is, how it does justice to all peoples and fulfils all their needs. Such a confirmation is proof of genuineness. What we see and possess here is in reality the figure of the Son of man which belongs to mankind. It is said that the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth has waned through the centuries. We have seen, on the contrary, that His likeness does not "hang suspended in history." The documents show us a clear, vivid, sharply defined but yet incredibly rich personality.¹ We get the same impression as, when looking at a good portrait of someone we have never seen, we realize that the artist has caught the likeness.

* * * *

This great experience we have had, this amazing fact which has been brought before our eyes, seeks now to operate on our thought. We look for conceptions, titles, doctrines, lofty enough for this Man. The creed and dogma of the Church provide in reality the tracings of boundaries, saying in effect, thus far and no further may pronouncements about Jesus go. Thus the Church and her work actually offer us only negations. All that she has collected and declared about Jesus in the course of history can ultimately be expressed in the negative form, e.g. Not mere man; not only God; not only the appearance of a body; not only one nature. In saying this we have no wish to underrate the dogmatic work of the Church. Within that body human thought has accomplished greater things than most people have any idea of. And in days of conflict these restricting boundaries were of great importance. Yet they still remain restrictions; such dogmatic formulas do not let us even see the rich land within the boundary lines. And such "seeing" is

¹ According to the ex-Kaiser's apt expression, "the most personal of all personalities."

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so important. "If you know Jesus intimately, what matter that your knowledge of other things is limited? But if Jesus is unknown to you, of what use is the rest of your knowledge?" (*Bugenhagens Wahlspruch*).

* * * * *

But this likeness of Jesus is not given us to sharpen our wits upon. It is and will remain too great for thought. What we are concerned with is that we should receive it with our wills. For it is not only meant to give us historical certainty; the real determining factor is, what religious experience do we get from it? The problem of Jesus is not to be solved by way of science but, as is the case with nearly all religious questions, by practice. Religious certainty is only to be gained at the price of religious experience. We shall be certain of Christ only if we possess Him as an active spiritual power.

In John's Gospel we are told that Jesus said on one occasion, "To him that loveth Me I will manifest Myself" (xiv. 21). How are we to love Jesus? Luther answers, "God must take the first step, must lay the first stone; He must radiate the love of Jesus in our hearts, and let us feel it." This is true. But we must also be willing that religious desire and moral need should be awakened in us. God draws us through Jesus; we must allow ourselves to be drawn. And further, with inexorable will-power we must transmute every little scrap of knowledge we win from Jesus into action.

The moral gift (example) in Jesus is not so important to us as the religious gift in its permanence. It is for us to experience Him as the One who leads us to the Father, who brings forgiveness of sins, who has power over evil spirits, and has conquered death. Make use of Jesus in the sense in which He gives Himself—as Saviour, as light, as fresh, vital power. Thus in experiencing Him your knowledge of Jesus will continue to be perfected.

* * * * *

CONCLUSION

This then is the conclusion: this Man "determines" me. All God's acts of revelation have the power to vouch for themselves, and the Son more than any of them. "I am the truth"—we are sure of this with all the strength of assurance which we have ourselves won. And we are sure of something more, that here we have the face of the Father revealed. In nature with its catastrophes and in human life with its convulsions we see nothing but the likeness of a sphinx. Where is thy God? What is He like? It is in vain that we seek there an answer to the puzzle. But in Christ we possess God "from within" (Luther). We cannot make any mistake about God after we have known Jesus.

* * * * *

Tennyson, standing once before a rose-bed in the garden, was asked by an unbelieving friend what Jesus really meant to him, and he answered, "What the sun means to these roses."

"God may have other Words for other worlds,
But for this world the Word of God is Christ."

"How mighty His love! To separate myself from it for the sake of a trifle is indeed to merit God's eternal wrath" (Dante).

APPENDIX

TWO PASSIONS

(See Chapter II, Book I, Part I)

The passion of a wise man, or a pagan, that is to say, human conception—"Who dies thus dies well."

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world." (1 COR. ii. 6)

1. Socrates has been condemned, and in a few minutes is to be led off to prison. Just then he addresses his disciples, saying, "[Stay then a little], for we may as well talk with one another while there is time."

(APOL. 39 E.)

1. Jesus knows that He has been betrayed and that Judas is bringing the crowd and the servants of the High Priest and of the Pharisees. "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy."

(MATT. xxvi. 37)

"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast." (LUKE xxii. 41)

2. Soc.: And are you only just arrived?

Cr.: No, I came some time ago.

Soc.: Then why did you sit and say nothing, instead of at once awakening me?

Cr.: I should not have liked myself, Socrates, to be in such great trouble and unrest as you are—indeed I should not. I have been watch'ing with amazement your peaceful slumbers; and for that reason I did not awake you, because I wished to minimize the pain. I have always thought you to be of a happy disposition; but never did I

2. It is midnight, and Jesus' last night on earth. Beside the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane stands that Master, who cannot and will not sleep. "And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." "And He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

(LUKE xxii. 44;

MATT. xxvi. 40, 41.)

APPENDIX

see anything like the easy, tranquil manner in which you bear this calamity."¹

(CRIT. 43 A.B.)

3. Socrates meditates: "Death is one of two [things]: either it means extinction, so that the dead man has no more feeling of anything; or else, as our sages tell us, death is like a departure and a translation from this to some other place." (APOL. 40 C.)

PROSPECTS:

"To be with Orpheus and with Museus, with Hesiod and with Homer." (APOL. 41 A.)

RESOLUTION:

"I for my part will gladly die a dozen times over if this be true." (APOL. 41 A.)

4. Socrates: "Already, as a tragic poet would say, the voice of FATE calls. Soon I must drink the poison; and I think that I had better repair to the bath first, in order that the women may not have the trouble of washing my body after I am dead."

(Phaed. 114 E.)

After these words he left the room to wash himself, and Criton followed him, but he commanded us to wait. . . . When he returned again to

3. Jesus knows: "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

(MATT. xxvi. 64)

PROSPECTS:

"I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater than I." (JOHN xiv. 28)

RESOLUTION:

"O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." (MATT. xxvi. 39)

"How am I straitened!"

(LUKE xii. 50)

4. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and He took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

(JOHN xiii. 4, 5)

This, too, is a curious proceeding. But is such humility to the taste of the world?

¹ Cf. Acts xii. 7. For Peter, too, it is a decisive night (v. 6). Yet he sleeps so soundly that the angel has to smite him on the side to waken him.

us it was almost sunset (the hour of death), for he had lingered long within. And he sat down beside us, fully bathed. (116 A.B.)

Curious—yet he went as a bridegroom leaves his chamber, and as a hero to run his course. (Compare the same information with regard to Oedipus and to Leonidas' Spartans.)

5. Hereafter Criton speaks to Socrates—it was just an hour before his death: "How will you have us order your burial?" "In any way that you like, but you must get hold of me, and take care that I do not run away from you." As he uttered these words, a quiet smile passed over his countenance.

(PHAED. 115)

6. Then the servant of the prison handed the cup to Socrates, who received it with good cheer, without trembling, and with no change of countenance. Rather he looked steadily at the man, as he was accustomed to do, saying, "Say, good Echecrates, may one make a libation [to the gods] out of this cup?" Whereupon

5. Just six days before the Passover Jesus went to Bethany. A gentle and unintentional hint of His burial is given when Mary anoints His feet, and this at once finds a strong echo in a spirit that dwells in thought of the grave, and takes no easy view of it. "For in that she has poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." (MATT. xxvi. 12 f.)

6. But Jesus prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." (MATT. xxvi. 39)

Yet in this case it was the Father, in the other the prison servant, who offered the cup.

the servant of the prison pointed out that there was only just enough wine in the cup, and Socrates contented himself with the prayer that the gods might "prosper my journey from this world to the other." After these words he put the cup to his lips and drank quickly and easily.

(PHAED. 117 B.C.)

7. Now when all his friends wept, he spoke to them, saying, "What are you doing, you strange people? Did I not expressly send away the women so that they should not give way to such foolishness? For I have been told that a man should die in reverent silence."

(PHAED. 117 D.)

8. "Good Criton, we owe Asclepius a cock. Pay that debt and forget it not!" After speaking thus he became quiet. Shortly afterwards he made a movement. Then the servant threw back the cloth (with which he had covered him when his limbs began to stiffen), and his eyes stood wide open. (PHAED. 118)

No one doubts that Plato, with his heart burning, idealized his master.

7. *Stabat mater dolorosa juxta crucem lacrimosa*, along with three other women (cf. also Luke xxiii. 27, "a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him").

8. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? . . . Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."

(MATT. xxvii. 46, 50)

Is there any sign here of an ideal likeness, drawn to appeal to the world?

NOTE.—It is true that the fact that Jesus was crucified by His own people is no proof that He was not a product of the development of that people. Socrates, too, a pure Greek, was rejected by his own nation. Yet afterwards they comprehended him, making much of him, and accepting him wholly. Even to-day Jesus is still a stranger to the majority of His nation, even to the great mass of humanity. He has at no time been wholly accepted. Yet people can still say that He is a natural product of this very humanity?

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